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SPIRITUAL CALENDAR

1998-1999

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1998

MARCH

29 Lunar New Year's Day; Sri Vasanta Navaratri begins
30 Sri Matsya Jayanti

APRIL

5 Sri Rama Navami; Sri Samartha Ramadas Jayanti
7 Ekadasi
9 Pradosha Puja; Sri Vardhamana Mahavira Jayanti
11 Chaitra Purnima; Sri Hanuman Jayanti
14 Mesha (Vishu) Sankranti (5.56 a.m.); Solar New Year's Day
22 Ekadasi
24 Pradosha Puja
26 Amavasya
29 Akshaya Tritiya; Sri Parasurama Jayanti

MAY

1 Sri Adi-Sankaracharya Jayanti
2 Sri Ramanujacharya Jayanti; Sri Ganga Saptami
7 Ekadasi
8 Pradosha Puja
10 Sri Narasimha Jayanti
11 Purnima; Sri Buddha Jayanti; Sri Kurma Jayanti
22 Ekadasi
23 Pradosha Puja
25 Amavasya

JUNE

1 Anniversary of Sannyasa Diksha of His Holiness Sri Swami Sivananda
4 Sri Ganga Dashara
5 Ekadasi (Nirjala)
7 Pradosha Puja
9/10 Purnima
20 Ekadasi
21 Pradosha Puja
24 Amavasya

JULY

3 50th Anniversary of The Yoga V
Forest Academy in Shivanandan
5 Ekadasi (Harisayani)
6 Chaturmasya Vrata begins
7 Pradosha Puja
9 Sri Guru Purnima; Sri Vyasa Puj
Sri Guru Puja
18 Dakshinayana begins; 35th Anniv
of the Punyatithi Aradhana of His
Holiness Sri Swami Sivananda
20 Ekadasi
21 Pradosha Puja
23 Amavasya
28 Sri Naga Panchami; Sri Kalki Jay
30 Sri Goswami Tulasidas Jayanti

AUGUST

4 Ekadasi
5 Pradosha Puja
7/8 Purnima; Upakarma; Rakshabandha
14 Sri Krishna Jayanti
18 Ekadasi
19 Pradosha Puja
21/22 Amavasya; Solar Eclipse (4-40 a.m. to 10-33 a.m.)
23 Sri Varaha Jayanti
26 Sri Ganesha Chaturthi
27 Rishi Panchami
30 Sri Radha Ashtami

SEPTEMBER

2 Ekadasi
3 Sri Vamana Jayanti (Dvadasi Day)
4 Pradosha Puja

[Continued on Cover iii

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—*Swami Sivananda*

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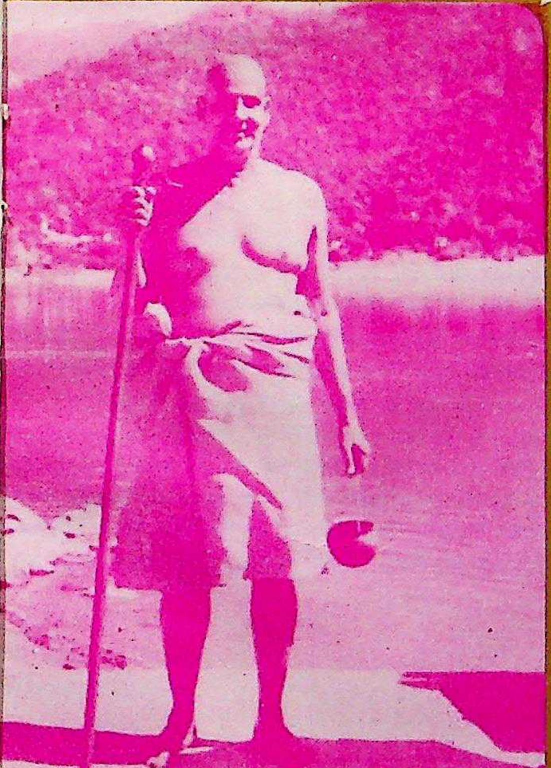

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ADMISSION NOTICE

Applications are hereby invited for undergoing Thirtieth residential YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE of two months duration, i.e., from 17th August to 15th October, 1998. This Course will be held in the Academy premises at the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar, Rishikesh.

The details are as follows:

1. It is open to Indian citizens (Men) only. The classes are for admitted applicants who have been duly registered as students for the course.
2. Age Group: Between 20 and 60 Years.
3. Qualifications:
   (a) Preferably Graduate with keen spiritual aspiration and deep interest in the practice of Yoga-Vedanta.
   (b) Must be able to converse in English fluently.
   (c) Should have sound health.
4. Duration of the Course:—Two months residential Course on Yoga, Vedanta and cultural values.
5. Scope and syllabus of the Course:
   (a) An outline study of History of Indian and Western Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, Studies in Religious Consciousness, the Philosophy of the Bhagavadgita, Patanjali's Yoga System, Narada Bhakti Sutras and the Philosophy of Swami Sivananda.
   (b) Practical:—Asana, Pranayama, Meditation and Karma Yoga, Lectures, Group discussions, Class Test, Questions and Answers, final examination will form part of the Course.
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7. Application form duly filled in should reach the undersigned by 10th July, 1998. The aim of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy is not merely an academic equipment of students, but to prepare the students for a successful life in the world and to facilitate the living of a wholesome life with an integrated personality. The Course conducted in this Academy is more of the nature of an all-round discipline than merely providing students with scriptural learning or textual information.

For the application form and prospectus please write to:

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(ii) The above syllabus (vide 5) is subject to slight alterations without previous notice, in case such a need arises.

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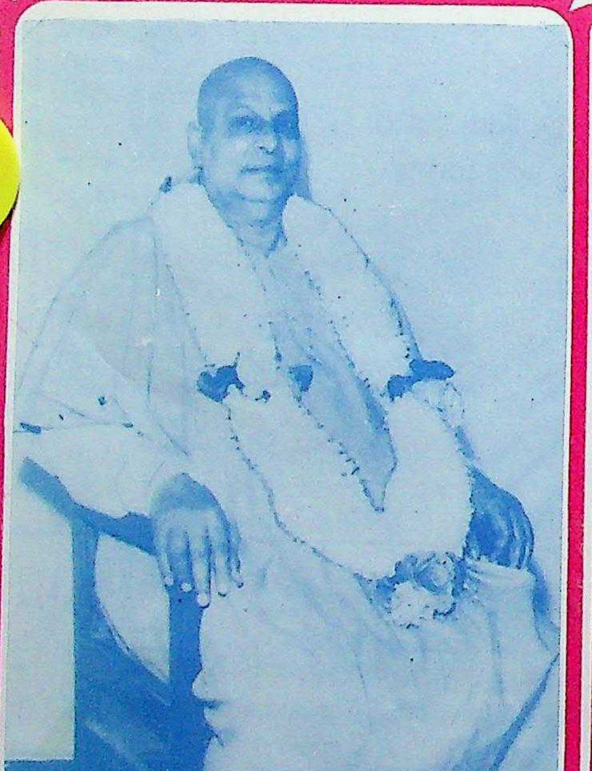

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Close the door of the intellect, shut the windows of the senses, retire to the chamber of your heart and enjoy the Bliss of the Eternal.

—SWAMI SIVANANDA

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—SWAMI SIVANANDA

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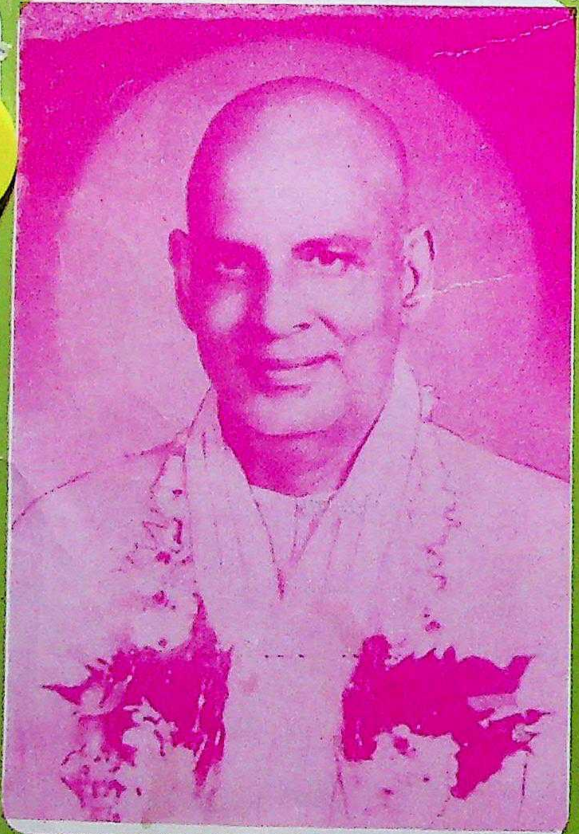

O man! Thou art a pilgrim here. Awake, awake. Life is short. Time is fleeting. Go back to your original home of immortal bliss.

—**Swami Sivananda**

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ॐ

सनत्सुजातीयम्

श्री धृतराष्ट्र उवाच–

ऋचो यजूंष्यधीते यः सामवेदं च यो द्विजः ।
पापानि कुर्वन् पापेन लिप्यते न स लिप्यते ॥

Richo yajumshyadheete yah samavedam cha yo dvijah,
Papani kurvan papena lipyate na sa lipyate.

Sri Dhritarashtra said:

The twice-born who studies (diligently) the Vedas, Rik, Yajus and Sama but also commits sinful actions—is he tainted with the sins or not?

—*Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, ii-3*

AIDS TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

While sincerity is a fundamental requisite on the spiritual path, its misapplication could be dangerous. Sincerity without right discernment is of little use, and right discernment or discriminative understanding could come only through experience, study, meditation and company of the wise.

After having read a few Vedantic texts or the Tao Te Ching, some aspirants tend to become megalomaniacs, and immediately put up granite walls on the path of progress.

SEEING GOD IN ALL

Beholding God in all, or feeling His presence everywhere, is a perpetual experience of the realised souls alone (and one could hardly find a single one of them in tens of millions). It can only form a part of one's spiritual endeavour, but when the aspirant becomes puffed up with the notion that he is seeing God in all, he, in fact, experiences his inflated ego.

When there is so much of impurity in the heart, when the mind is so very confused, when selfishness is the ruling whip, it is absurd to talk of beholding God in all. Without scaling the foothills, you cannot climb the Everest.

As the purity of mind increases, and when the senses are withdrawn, one *could* momentarily be aware of the presence of God within and without, but that is only a transitory experience, the duration of which depends on the extent of *sadhana,* but as soon as the mind descends upon the physical plane, as it must, dragged down by the force of its *karmas*, one cannot help acting in accordance with their characteristics.

IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE

Spiritual disciplines, therefore, are of fundamental importance for every single aspirant. It is ludicrous to talk in terms of the absolute Reality when the savage within jumps up at the slightest provocation. It is equally fantastic to say, "I am neither man, nor woman; immortal soul am I," when one is not even a human being within, but a ferocious animal, ruled by strong likes and dislikes, morbid self-centredness, hate and infatuation.

Never forget the importance of self-discipline. It does not mean suppression, but taming the brute within. It means humanisation of the animal, and spiritualisation of the human. It means cleansing of impurities, sublimation of the lower urges, not their repression.

Patanjali did not begin his *Yogasutras* with lessons on *samadhi* or superconsciousness. Do not forget that. He did not even talk of concentration and meditation (*dharana* and *dhyana*) without having laid emphasis on *pratyahara* or withdrawal of the senses from external objects. He did not think of *pratyahara* without steadiness of posture and regulation of breath (*asana* and *pranayama*). He did not think of spiritual life without *yama* and *niyama*. Never forget that.

FIRST STEPS FIRST

Vedanta does not ask you to think in terms of *Sivoham* or *Soham*, if you do not

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possess the "four means" or the *sadhana-chatushtaya*. These "four-means" constitute a vast part of *sadhana*, after which alone could one regard oneself as a Vedantin.

The path of devotion does not stress on *para bhakti* (a state in which the meditator and the meditated upon are one), unless one has achieved a great deal by purifying the heart through the repetition of the Lord's name, steadying the mind through meditation on His form, and cleansing the impurities through divine worship and service.

Without *yama* and *niyama*, or the "four means," or prayer, recitation of the divine name, meditation, service and cultivation of virtues, it is just nonsense to talk in superlative term of Self-realisation, or say that you are neither a man nor a woman or that you love the Self in all beings equally.

'YAMA-NIYAMA'

Never forget the importance of *yama* and *niyama*. *Yama* means self-restraint, taming the animal within. Patanjali cites five *yamas* or restraints. They are: (1) abstinence from injury in any form; (2) truthfulness; (3) continence; (4) abstinence from depriving others of anything that is theirs; and (5) abstinence from avariciousness *(ahimsa, satya, brahmacharya, asteya, aparigraha).*

Self-restraint is basic to Yoga. You cannot have balance of mind without restraint and sublimation of the lower urges. There is so much of violence in life—in thought, word and deed. Not a single day passes when one does not hurt another in some form or other. A single act of injury destroys a good deal of one's *sadhana*.

VIOLENCE INEXCUSABLE

Even in saints violence is inexcusable. You can only call such rare lapses in them as temporary loss of spiritual balance, as Dr. Radhakrishnan says when referring to Jesus Christ's act of whipping the money-lenders. In individual relationship, to take recourse to violence in order to justify a so-called spiritual reason is inexcusable.

It is a different matter when one has to act in self-defence, or when there is danger to life, or when one has to fight for defending one's country, but to justify violence in the name of spirituality is outrageous.

Truthfulness does not mean speaking the truth in a mechanical way. One may speak the truth and yet follow the path of untruth. Truth-speaking, when it brings harm to another, or hurts the feelings of another, becomes a contradiction of truth by effecting violence. Truthfulness covers integrity, abiding by the ideal of justice, never swerving from the path of honesty. The path of truth is an austere path.

CONTINENCE

Continence does not merely mean physical celibacy. It is mainly indicative of the purity of life that is dedicated to God (*brahmacharya*). The heart must be pure, free from ill-will and hate. The mind must be free from impure thoughts. The sex-urge should be intelligently disciplined. There should be no repression, but sublimation.

For a *sannyasin*, *brahmacharya* means a life-long vow of celibacy; for a householder it means regulation and discipline of his vital urges, and fulfilling them to the extent necessary, while not being their slave.

You would yourself know the importance of the different kinds of restraints and their benefic influence on your life, in general, as you progress on the spiritual path.

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SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES

Yama and *niyama* go together. *Niyama* means observance—any kind of observance directed to help spiritual unfoldment. Patanjali cites five observances: (1) internal and external purity; (2) contentment; (3) austerity; (4) study of scriptures; and (5) worship of God or self-surrender *(saucha, santosha, tapas, svadhyaya, ishvara-pranidhana).*

The body and mind must be kept clean. If the thoughts are pure, only then could there be mental poise. If the body is dirty, the mind also will be slovenly. Contentment is a result of mature understanding, not a state of resignation. The heart should be peaceful, and the hands active in the service of God, which means service of one's fellow-beings.

Austerity not only means discipline of the body to heat and cold to a certain extent, but balance of mind in pleasure and pain. Austerity, like *asana* and *pranayama*, is only a means, and should not be made a fetish.

WORSHIP

It is not necessary to detail the importance of widening the horizon of one's knowledge through study, observation, meditation and the company of the wise. Worship of God means any form of worship suited to one's temperament. Cultivation of the qualities associated with God, such as mercy, compassion, forgiveness, justice, tolerance, and so on, is one of the finest forms of worship.

Self-surrender does not mean irresponsibility and inertia, but offering of oneself to the Divine, which indicates a complete process of self-cleansing (you do not offer a soiled flower in worship) and freedom from egotism, vanity and pride.

'FOUR MEANS'

The *four means*, on the path of Jnana Yoga, embody in them many of the principles of *yama* and *niyama*. *Viveka* or discriminative understanding is given the first importance; then *vairagya* or dispassion for sense-objects. Without these, spiritual life is just a mockery.

The third means is termed *shat-sampat*, or six-fold virtues, namely, *shama, dama, uparati, titiksha, sraddha* and *samadhana.*

Shama is tranquillity of mind effected through eradication of cravings, renunciation of mundane desires. It is interrelated with *dama* which means control of the senses.

Uparati is satiety, born of discriminative understanding; it means a state of self-withdrawal, in which the mind does not function through the means of external objects.

Titiksha, or austerity—physical and mental—has already been referred to. The practice of the formula, "Adapt, adjust, accommodate; bear insult, bear injury," is a great *titiksha.*

Sraddha means faith, which is like a keel that balances the boat of life, while *viveka* corresponds to rudder, and *mumukshutva*, or desire for liberation, to propeller. Faith in God, faith in oneself, faith in the Guru, faith in the wise teachings, faith in all that is good and noble, is the sap of life.

Samadhana is the result of the five of the six-fold virtues, which means "self-settledness," a state of perfect balance, an unruffled state of mind, free from likes and dislikes, love and hate, doubt and despair. It is also an independent virtue which must be cultivated by patient practice, and, however momentarily one might experience it, one

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should try to attain it during meditation and at other times, too.

MOTIVE-POWER

Mumukshutva means intense longing for freedom from the cycle of births and deaths, a burning desire for Self-realisation. It is the motive-power in all *sadhanas*, the propelling factor that pushes you along the path. If this is lacking, *sadhana* becomes static.

Remember these aids to spiritual progress. Never underestimate them. Do not delude yourself. Let no one call you a symbol of vanity or an egotist, for there could be nothing worse than spiritual vanity or egotism justified in the name of spirituality. Take care of the details, and the major factor will take care of itself. You have to plod on and scale many hills. You cannot climb the Everest in one jump. There is no jumping on the spiritual path.

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THE LIVING CALL: THE BHAGAVAD GITA

(SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA)

[Continued from the previous issue]

It might be alright for those who have entered into a monastery or gone into a convent or retired into a forest or mountain cave but how are we, who are in the midst of the world, how can we think of God? Everything makes us distracted and takes us away from God thought. So this problem was given a solution by the World Teacher, the giver of Gita wisdom. It is at once amazing and mysterious. He says, look here, what a pity that you should say so. I have created this entire universe so that you may climb up the housetops and proclaim my presence. Everything, everything in this world has been kept there in order to remind you of me. How can this be? You have failed to understand the significance of this universe. These things are there as reminders of me. Everything I have kept there so that it may be constantly reminding you of me who am behind them, who have made them. Remember, as you go about the world work. That thing that your senses perceive, immediately bring me to your mind. Revealing this truth, this mystical truth about the universe to Arjuna, he said I am to be seen in all things.

Arjuna asked how then in the Tenth Chapter of the Gita, he goes on telling how His presence can be perceived. At the end of it he says why go on describing it in such elaborate detail, let me tell you that though pervading this entire universe by a garment of myself, a fraction of myself, I still abide supreme. I exist beyond. Now Arjuna says I understand what you say. If it is possible can you please give me an actual experience of what you have just now told me? Can I actually see your presence in all the universe?

Marvel of great marvels, out of compassion and love for Arjuna he says you are asking a tall order; to give such a thing is unheard of, even the gods don't know it. Even the greatest sages are not aware of this. It is not revealed to everyone. But because you are very dear to me, I will give you an actual glimpse of it, an experience of it. That is a glorious part of the Bhagavad Gita. After having known this you can no more say that the world makes me forget God. You must study the Eleventh Chapter: Whatever Arjuna beholds he sees only God. He experiences this world as the Great Cosmic Form, the Universal Form of God. The world stands revealed before his gaze-God in manifestation. So this solves the problem of the Sadhak struggling along in this world. He is always in the presence of God. All things are there only as expressions of the Great Reality which is what I am seeking to realise. Thus the Bhagavad Gita teaching brings home to us the great message of hope. Even a person involved in this world, even he is not far off from God. God surrounds him everywhere in the form of all things. But then one says I am constantly engaged in activity, so many things to do, always busy. Even though I may remember you I am not able to get time to sit and meditate for long periods.

The Lord says erase this artificial line of demarcation which you have drawn between meditation and activity, between the so-called secular and the spiritual. Activity must be regarded equally as meditation. Therefore spiritualise all your actions. Then there will be no more ordinary action. They will become yogic activity. Yoga is everything that brings you into contact with the Divine, then every activity becomes part and parcel of yoga. It becomes Sadhana. Therefore, the Lord says I am always by your side, wherever you are, you are surrounded by me. I am the objects in this world. Therefore you are ever in my presence. Therefore all activities being done in my presence regard them as adoration and worship. Offer them up at my feet, I will accept them no matter what the activity is or the form of the activity, it doesn't matter. I will take it as adoration and worship and bless you. Every activity that you have to engage in due to your call of duty, offer that up to me.

The Lord has tried to make life and Sadhana as easy as possible. For every problem he has given a way out. To every question he has given an answer. But we have to actualise it. We should regard the Gita not merely as a little printed book of paper. In the Gita you must find the Lord. With great compassion and with love He is seeking to lead you out of this labyrinth into a state of liberation. He takes you by the hand and shows you the way out. This is why the Gita is not a book. It is the Lord stretching out his hands. Come, I will take you, I will show you the way out for every situation. It will show you a solution. In this way you must understand the Gita, approach it. It is the direct promise of the Lord. Gradual, step by step, stage by stage, He tries to bring it out and give Himself to you.

If you will thus see the Gita as the living call of the Lord, the living guidance of the Lord, as light upon the path, and a way of Sadhana outlined to suit your present problematic situation in this world, then it will become a completely different thing in your life. It will not merely be a thing of study—Swadhaya—it is not that. It will become a way of life. The Gita will become your liberator. Therefore we must regard the Gita as a presence, here and now. It is not some ancient thing given to us as part of the Mahabharata. No, no, it is something vitally relevant. It is some thing of the moment, here and now. When you approach the Gita it is a living call of the Lord, now,

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ever new. It is not something that he said to Arjuna. It is what He is now at this moment saying to you and me, to all of us. That is the Gita.

Therefore your whole attitude should be one of dynamic acceptance of its message into our lives, and the transformation of this message into life. Live it. If you do that, the last concluding verse says you will have everything that you want. All auspiciousness, blessedness, victory over maya and highest attainment will be yours. Where this great science and technique of liberation given by the great master is accompanied by a disciple who is ready to act upon it with full willingness, there is sure victory over maya. There is highest attainment and blessedness. All auspiciousness is guaranteed. But, then both conditions should be fulfilled. The Lord comes to you with this great science of Yoga and you must say "yes". From this moment, live it. I accept it in toto. I will obey you, I will carry out your instructions.

In the beginning of the Gita, remember the beginning,—it was the refusal of Arjuna to do what the Lord wanted him to do. No he said, I cannot do it. If at the end of the Eighteenth Chapter Arjuna has still maintained this same posture, i.e. whatever you say I cannot do it, the whole of the Bhagavad Gita would have been down the drain as they say. It would not have been of any use. But it is not like that. What happened in the eighteenth chapter when the Lord comes to the end of his wonderous teachings, see how democratic He is – how very democratic. He doesn't force His views upon Arjuna. He says, look here, I have put all the facts before you. I have told you the entire truth about what life is and everything about it. Now it is up to you. Having told you, brought you all the insights, pointed out to you the errors and the right path to follow, now it is up to you. What you wish, you may do. At this crucial point, the concluding point, we have a different Arjuna altogether.

Arjuna uvacha:

Nashto mohah smritirlabdhaa twatprasaadaan-
mayaachyuta;
Sthitosmi gatasandehah karishye vachanam tava.

Arjuna said:

Destroyed is my delusion, as I have gained my memory (knowledge) through Thy grace, O Krishna, I remain freed from doubts. I will act according to Thy word.

I sometimes feel that this is the most important part of the whole of the Bhagavad Gita. Arjuna responds to the wisdom teaching of the Lord by telling the Lord: *Karishye vachanam tava*. I shall now carry out your words. I shall do what you asked me to do. If the Arjuna within us which was directed to follow the indications of the Lord, to do what has to be done, also now changes and responds from within with a yes, we become committed to do what the Gita wants. If the Arjuna within you also says yes, I shall stand up prepared to act, and I shall carry out what you want me to do, then your liberation, highest blessedness, all victory is yours.

This is then a little glimpse into the great scripture, the Eternal message of God to man. It is the eternal call of the Divine to the human being, the call of the Guru to the disciple. I am very, very happy to have had this wonderful opportunity of trying to make you sit up and take a new look at your Bhagavad Gita. Look at it with a new perspective. It is no more a book to read. It is no more a thing of reading and Swadhyaya. It is not that. It is the Lord talking to me and pointing out what I must do. So it is a living call, practical direction, and I must obey. In this lies my highest blessedness. It has shown me the real nature of the world, the real nature of sense objects, sense experiences. It has shown wherein lies sorrow, wherein lies joy and what I should do and what I should not do. It says what I should avoid and how I should bear life and in what direction should be my efforts. It has shown how I should view the world and how I should move in this world. Everything has been told in the brief compass of this little summary. Therefore let the Gita be to us no more a book, but a Living Presence. It is the Divine teacher by our side guiding our footsteps telling what to do. At every step let us say, I shall certainly do it. I shall follow your instructions. Thus let the Gita be to us something that pervades our life, that is present in our hearts and guides our footsteps and takes to the Supreme goal.

Gita is Yogasastras, Gita is Jnana, Gita is Bhakti Yoga, Gita is Karma Yoga and Gita is Dhyana Yoga. In the second Chapter it is Jnana Yoga; in the Third Chapter it is Karma Yoga; in the Sixth Chapter it is Raja Yoga; in the Twelfth Chapter it is Bhakti Yoga.

It is the exposition of the mysteries of the Highest Reality. Karma, Bhakti, Jnana and Dhyana are synthesized in the Gita. This life is the way to liberation and holy master Swami Sivananda calls it the Divine Life because it leads to Divine consciousness and perfection. The basis of it is the practice of virtue, development of virtue. Througout the Eighteenth Chapter, again and again, the Lord emphasizes the need to lead a holy life, a pure life, a virtuous life.

Lead the Gita life. Serve, love, give, purify, meditate and realise. So, this is in a nutshell all of the Upanishads and Gita. I have brought it to you by the Grace of the lord. It is yours to have it, but what you do with it is left to you. God bless you. Peace and joy to you all. May your lives shine with dynamic spiritual effort to attain the Supreme Goal. *(Concluded)*

PARABLE OF THE MOTHER'S TRICK

A mother was trying to give an ounce of bitter medicine to her child. However much she might caress and cajole the child, he would not take the medicine. She hit upon a wonderful idea. She placed a sweet 'laddu' before the child and said: "If you take this medicine, I will give you the laddu." At once the child drank the medicine. As the medicine removed the effect of the disease and gave him abundant energy, he ran away in great joy, even forgetting the 'laddu'.

If you tell a man, "Please do this Yajna (sacrifice)", he will not do, because he seeks pleasure through every action. Therefore, the Vedas offer Svarga, etc., as rewards for sacrifices. When man performs the sacrifices, his heart is purified and gradually wisdom dawns in him. He does not even bother any more Svarga and the finite happiness there. In Supreme Bliss he gets liberated.

—Swami Sivananda

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VAISHVANARA VIDYA

(SRI SWAMI KRISHNANANDA)

THE PANCHAGNI VIDYA

The Upanishads are mainly meditations intended to act as correctives to the binding effects that are produced by the phenomena of natural processes. While what we call a natural process subjects us to its own laws, these laws can be overcome and their imposition upon the individual can be counteracted by techniques of meditation. The philosophy of the Upanishads is that it is an ignorance of the way in which the Universe works that binds the individual to *Samsara,*—the series of births and deaths. Our sorrows are, in a way, created by our own selves, because they follow as a consequence of our not abiding by the law of the universe. The affirmation of a reality independent of what really is, is called the ego. That is the centre of personality. This affirmation of individuality, *Jivatva,* personality, or something separate from the organic structure of creation, is the cause of the sorrow or the suffering of the *Jiva,* the individual manifested due to the affirmation of the ego. Births and deaths are the punishments, as it were, meted out to the individual in order that it may be reformed in the field of experience of the world for the purpose of enabling it to return to the normal state of consciousness which is universality of being, of which it is deprived at present due to the ignorance of its connection with the universe and a false notion that it has about its own self that it has an independence of its own.

The sections of the Chhandogya Upanishad, which we are going to study, are a gradational ascent of knowledge for the purpose of meditations which lift us above the phenomena of ordinary experience, such as birth and death and bondage of every kind, and point to the methods of transcending all sorrow, whatever be its nature, and regaining the originality of being. The various sections that follow are a systematic teaching on what we may call *Adhyatma-Vidya,* or *Atma-Vidya,* a knowledge of the ultimate Self, which is the only remedy for the malady of empirical existence.

This section which we are about to commence, is a treatise on a particular method of meditation called *Panchagni-Vidya*, the knowledge of the Five Fires by which the Upanishad means the various processes of manifestation, or, we may say, evolution, it being one's bondage and the way in which the cycle of transmigration revolves. There is a coming and going, descending and ascending in this *Samsara-chakra,* or the revolving wheel of bondage. How it happens, and how one can be free from it, what are the methods to be employed for the purpose of freeing oneself from the clutches of this involuntary law that imposes itself upon us and binds us to its own mandate so that we do not seem to have any say in the matter of births and deaths or even the experiences that we have to pass through,—these are our themes. The law of the universe is so vastly spread in its magnitude that it weighs heavy upon us when it is not followed. This question of the bondage of the soul brought about by its own ignorance and the various remedies

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therefor, are discussed in the various sections.

While the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is more transcendent in its approach and provides techniques of meditation which are mostly above the reaches of the ordinary mind, the Chhandogya Upanishad takes us along the path of ordinary experience, and then, finally, lifts us above into the empyrean of supreme transcendence. Often, scholars have held the opinion that the Brihadaranyaka is *Aprapancha* in its view and the Chhandogya is *Saprapancha,* which means to say that the Brihadaranyaka concerns itself with the ultimate Absolute and every solution is from the point of view of the Absolute only. So, it has taken the final step in setting about finding a remedy for the problem of life, while the normal man has also been taken into consideration in the Chhandogya, though the ultimate aim is the same, here also. Thus, the Brihadaranyaka and the Chhandogya form, in a way, complementary aspects of a single study.

THE COURSE OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH

The *Panchagni-Vidya,* to which reference has been made, is a particular type of knowledge, or meditation, which is introduced to know the inner meaning of the common phenomenon of birth and death. What we experience in normal life is only the effect of certain causes which are invisible to the eyes. We see people being born and people dying, but we do not know why people are born and why people die. The causes are unknown to us. What is it that compels a person to be born and what is it that forces him to die ? We know very well, we have no say in either of these ways. We cannot say this or that in respect of these processes. Nor is there any adequate knowledge of the secret of one's own experiences. Birth, death and the experiences in life are apparently effects produced upon us by causes of which we seem to have no knowledge. The Upanishad, in these meditations, tries to introduce us into a new type of knowledge which is the solution to the sorrows that are incumbent upon being subject to the laws of this natural phenomenon.

In this connection, the Upanishad commences with a story. There was a student named Svetaketu who was the son of sage Uddalaka. This student was well-read and finely educated. He was so confident about his knowledge that he used to parade his learning and calibre in the midst of all learned people, have discussions in courts of kings etc., and was very reputed for his great educational gift. This boy went, by chance, to the court of king called Pravahana Jaivali, a noble emperor. The moment the boy arrived at the court, the king received him with respect, and after offering him the requisite hospitality becoming of a Brahmin boy well-versed in the Vedas and all the branches of learning the king put a question to the boy.

"Are you well educated? Have you studied? Is your education complete? Has your father instructed you?" The boy said, "Yes, my education is over, and I am well read."

Then the king put some questions. "Naturally, you are a well-informed person so as to be able to answer any pose. You are proficient in every branch of learning." That the boy professed to be, that he would be able to answer any question. Then the king posed five questions.

The first question was: "Do you know where people go after they depart from this world? When people die, where do they go? Do you know the answer to this question, my dear boy?" The boy said, "I do not know

I cannot answer this question." Then the king asked another question, "Do you know wherefrom people come when they are reborn into this world?" The boy said, "I do not know this also." "Do you know, have you any idea of the paths along which the soul ascends, the paths being known as the Devayana and the Pitriyana?" "Do you know the difference between these two paths? Why is the one distinct from the other?" The boy said, "I do not know the answer to this question also."

Then the fourth question: "Why is it that the yonder world is not filled with people and overflowing? Always, the world is able to contain people and it is never flooded with them. What is the reason for this?" "This, also, I do not know." Now the fifth question: "Do you know what are the five oblations that are offered and how the fifth oblation as liquid becomes a human being?" "This, too, I do not know," said the boy.

Then, the king said, "Why did you say that you are instructed and well-read? How is it possible for one to regard oneself as properly educated if one cannot answer even these questions? What made you think that you are educated? What is it that your father taught you if he has not told you these things?" The boy was humbled, his pride vanished, he began to realise that there are things which he could not understand. His education was not complete. This was the first time that he was taken aback from the conviction that he knew everything.

Though the king asked him to stay, he ran in agony, back to his father. He did not stay in the palace, and in the intensity of discomfiture he rushed to the father and cried out, "How is it that you told me once that I have been instructed and well-educated, and that I have been informed in every branch of learning? This is what you told me one day. You told me that there is nothing more for me to learn, that I have completed my education." The father replied, "Yes, what about it?" "No," retorted the boy. "It is not like that. This fellow of a king put me some questions and I could not answer even one. Not properly educating me, you merely told me that I am accomplished." "What are the questions?" the father asked. The boy repeated all the five questions. "These are the five questions that were put to me by the king. Now, what is the answer to these questions?" he asked the father. The father said, "If I knew the answers to these questions, naturally I would have taught them to you. I myself do not know what these mean. I have taught you what I knew, and these are things which are beyond myself, also. I have never heard of these things. So, how is it possible for me to give a reply to this query? Let us both go as students before the king. This is the only alternative left to us. We can learn this knowledge from the king himself. We have to go as humble students." The boy said, "You yourself may go, I am not coming." He was so ashamed that he would not like to show his face before the king, again. And so, the father went; the boy did not go.

The father humbly went to the court of the king. The king, of course, received the great Brahmin with high honour, with great respect and showed the required hospitality. Gautama stayed in the palace, for the night. The next morning, when the king came to the court, in the assembly, to give audience, the Brahmin also went there. The king said: "Revered one, ask for anything which is of this world; any material gain, any amount of wealth, whatever you need for your maintenance. Ask for it, and I am ready to give it to you. Anything that pertains to this world, anything that is human, anything that is material,—ask for such a boon and I shall give it as a gift." The Brahmin replied: "By God's grace I have enough of material wealth. I do not need anything of this world. You may keep this wealth for yourself. I do not require this wealth, but do give me the reply to the questions you put before my son. I have come to you for knowledge, not for wealth, not for any material gift which you are so kindly offering to me and which I do not need. But I want the wisdom of the questions which you posed before my son, and which he could not answer."

The king was perplexed; he was disturbed in his mind when the Brahmin spoke thus. He did not know what to say, because it is difficult suddenly to impart a knowledge to a person the moment he asks for it. That is the procedure of any teacher. This is the position of the imparting of knowledge. Also, Kshatriyas do not seek Brahmins to be their pupils. That was the ancient custom. The king was a Kshatriya and now the student here is a Brahmin. Brahmins teach Kshatriyas; Kshatriyas do not teach Brahmins. So, under those circumstances, the king did not know what to tell this Brahmin. He was a little bit concerned in his mind and was not sure as to what to tell him.

What the king could tell the Brahmin then was just this: "You stay here for some time. We shall think about it." It is believed that he was asked to stay, perhaps, for a year. That is what the tradition makes out. The Brahmin stayed there as a preparatory austerity for the reception of this knowledge. Thereafter, the king said one day: "You ask me to give you the knowledge of the things which have been set apart as a secret by the Kshatriyas upto this time. It has never gone to the circle of Brahmins till today. But, now the time has come for it to go out of the circle of Kshatriyas, because you have come to me as a student and you want this knowledge. Till now, because of this secret of knowledge which the kings held, they were predominant everywhere. They could rule over everybody due to the power that they wielded by this knowledge, and now you want to get this secret out of me.' Anyhow, the king was ready; he was not reluctant; he was prepared to share this knowledge with the Brahmin, the elderly man who came as a humble student in the ordinary tradition of obedience and humility. And to him the king spoke the great truth.

Now comes the actual answer which follows in respect of everyone of the questions which the king put to the boy. These answers which the king gives are certain meditations. They are processes of the attunement of the mind to higher levels of being. They are called *'Vidyas'* because they are specific types of knowledge. *'Vidya'* also means a meditation, a contemplation. A higher knowledge is called *Vidya,* something distinct from ordinary knowledge, scientific or artistic knowledge, and the like.

The superiority of the knowledge arises on account of the fact of its being more inclusive in its character than all the other known branches of learning. Every form of learning in this world is isolated in the sense that it bears no connection to the other branches of learning. A person who is proficient in one branch need not be proficient in another, and, therefore, there is a limitedness of such knowledge. Our knowledge is finite; it is not all-comprehensive. Whatever be the education of a person, he cannot become all-knowing. There is something which he does not know, which keeps him subject to laws of which he has no knowledge. What binds

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us is the ignorance of something which exists somewhere, but about which we have no information whatsoever. Wherever there is ignorance, there is also bondage in respect of that subject or that circumstance. When we have knowledge of a thing, we are not bound to that thing, we have a control over that thing. The greater is the knowledge that we have about anything, the greater also is the capacity we have in making it subservient to our own selves. But, the more is the ignorance we have about a thing, the more are we subservient to its laws. The world binds us; the law of gravitation limits us; the law of Nature restricts us, because we do not have an adequate knowledge of these laws. We do not know how they operate and why it is that we have been made subject to these laws. What is wrong with us? We do not know this, though we know that there is something fundamentally wrong with everyone of us, on account of which the whole world keeps us in subjection. We are under the thumb of every law in the world. The reason is that we are apparently outside that realm of the operation of this law. We are like exiles cast out into the winds, and the law set around our necks, as it were, compels us to follow its dictates. We cannot overcome the law of gravitation, to give only one instance. We are slaves of this law. We can fall down and break our legs; we can get drowned; we can be burnt; anything can happen to us. Our very life on earth is based on and is decided by that law. But this happens on account of certain patent limitations in our life. There is some sort of a finitude in our own bodies and the entire personality of ours. Our fate is the same in respect of any law that operates anywhere. We cannot think things which are not purely sensory or physical; we cannot visualise things which are super-physical; we cannot understand any aspect of reality which is not in space, which is not in time and which is not causally related. And outside the realm of our own organic personality, we cannot have a real knowledge. We are finites, we are bound, we are limited in every way.

The processes of birth and death, again, are to be explained from this point of view. There is some law which works in some peculiar manner on account of which we are compelled to follow this course known as transmigration. Is anyone prepared to die ? But we have no say in the matter. We will die one day or the other. But why should we die? Who tells you that you must die? No one knows this. And if somebody is born, well, it is doubtful if anyone is born due to the personal wish of anyone. There is some force working, behind. So is the case with every kind of experience through which we pass. We do not know what will happen to us tomorrow. So much is our ignorance, so that it appears that we are utterly humiliated beings, shame- faced in every way, ignorant to the core and completely subject to the law of forces of which we have absolutely no knowledge.

Now, the *Panchagni-Vidya* is a kind of remedy prescribed by way of a meditation which is regarded as a great secret by the Upanishadic teachers. Even if you hear it being expounded once, you will not be able to understand much out of it. It does not mean that you will get out of the law of Nature merely by listening to what the king appeared to have said, because they are secrets bound up with one's own personal life. To us, they are only theoretical information like the existence of a fourth dimension etc. as propounded by physics. You may hear it a hundred times, but you are not going to enter it for reasons obvious. Likewise is this

Panchagni-Vidya, or even the greater still *Vaishvanara-Vidya,* which will follow. They will remain as a mere doctrine and exposition. To the Upanishads, knowledge is the same as being. It is practice. A thing that you live in your own personal life is true knowledge, and apart from the fact that it has to be a part of your being, it is also to be comprehensive. It should not exclude any reality or any aspect of manifestation. These two conditions have to be fulfilled. Neither can we be confident that some aspect of reality is not excluded from our purview, nor are we sure that this knowledge can become a part of our vitals. So, they will remain a mere theorem in the books. However, we can have an outline of the knowledge which the great king imparted to the circle of Brahmins by way of this initiation called the knowledge of the *Panchagni-Vidya.*

As I mentioned, *Vidya* means knowledge, meditation, a comprehensive insight into the nature of the reality behind any phenomenon. Now, what are these phenomena? The insight into which the Upanishad here leads us is the phenomenon of the descent of souls from the other regions into this world and the phenomenon of the ascent of souls from this region to the higher ones,—how souls descend and how souls ascend. When we consider these processes as mere events among many others, they exert a binding influence upon us. You know people are born; you know people die. This much of knowledge we do have. And, perhaps, we have also a knowledge that certain actions that we perform are responsible for our births and deaths and our experiences in life. The good that we do brings good experiences, the pleasant ones; and the bad ones produce contrary results. This much of information we have gathered by study, hearing etc. But this is not the knowledge that will liberate us.

The five Fires, called the *Panchagnis,* mentioned here, are not actually fires in the physical sense. They are meditational techniques. The Fire, here, is symbolic of a sacrifice which one performs through contemplation. How are these sacrifices performed visibly with the traditional sense of rituals? There is a sacrificial ground; there is a sacred altar in which the holy oblations are offered through the instrumentality of the sacred fire. There is the blazing fire flaming forth from the altar in the holy atmosphere of the sacrifice. And there is a substance that is offered, the sacrament. And certain ideas are entertained in the mind of the *Yajamana* or the performer of the sacrifice, which are conveyed through the recitation of certain *Mantras.* The *Mantras* that are chanted or recited, in the performance of the *Yajna,* or the sacrifice, are the sacred intentions of the performer expressed in language. This is the methodology of the performance of a sacrifice usually. The offerings are made to certain deities. The invocation of a particular celestial, a god, or a deity is the intention behind the performance of the sacrifice. Now, the Upanishad, here, tells us that the whole universal activity of creation may be conceived as such a kind of sacrifice,—*Yajna.*

If we are unable to conceive the internal connection and the pros and cons and the relative relationships involved in a particular process of creation, we would not be free from the law of subjection to these forces which are responsible for this creation. Again, unless we have a practical living knowledge of the various factors that are involved in the process of manifestation, or creation, we cannot be free from the law of manifestation. Births and deaths are parts of the universal process. What we call the universal process of manifestation is inclusive of every event that takes place anywhere, in any manner, including the experiences through which we are passing here in life.

The point that the Upanishad would make out is that no event or no experience can be isolated from other experiences. Just as every performance or every item or ritual in a sacrifice is connected to every other item, the whole *Yajna,* or the sacrifice in a single comprehensive act of which the various items are only parts internally connected, the whole universal manifestation is a single process. It is a continuity throughout from beginning to end, and births and deaths and other phenomenal experiences are not isolated factors. They are connected to ultimate causes. If we can contemplate the internal connection that obtains between the effects that are visible with the causes that are invisible, then we would be free from the clutches, or the harassments, of these laws which are operating outside us.

There are various stages of manifestation. Here, a specific type of manifestation is under consideration for the purpose of meditation. How the birth of an individual takes place, how a child is born, is the actual question on hand. We are so ignorant that we think that the child is born from the womb of the mother. We know only that much, but this is the least type of knowledge that one can have about the birth of a child. The child is not pushed out of the womb of the mother, as if by a magic. It is a tremendous process that takes place throughout the cosmos. All the officials of the government of the universe are active in the production of a single child's career. The whole universe vibrates with action even if a single baby is to be born somewhere in the corner of a house. It is not a private phenomenon of a little child coming out unknown somewhere in a nook and corner of the world, as people ignorantly behold or believe. The whole universe feels the presence and the birth of a single child anywhere. So what produces a child is not the father, or the mother. It is the whole cosmos that produces the child. The universe is the parent of this little baby. It may be a human baby, a subhuman one or a super-human form. Whatever be the character of that child, even if it may be an inorganic production, an atom, or an electron, or the composition of a molecule, the birth of it is regarded as the birth of a child, and it is made possible by the operation of cosmic factors. The whole universe is our father; the entire universe is our mother; the universe is the parent. That is the cause, and even if a little liquid is jetted from a pore we would realise that, ultimately, it has some connection with the universal cause of all causes, by a chain of relations.

The Upanishad tells us this secret of cosmic interconnectedness and involution of factors which are unknown to the senses and unthinkable to the mind. There is no such thing as a private act in this world. There is also no such thing as 'my' child and 'your' child. If this secret is known, no one will say, "It is my son, my daughter". It is neither yours nor anybody's. It belongs to that from where it has come. And from where has it come? It has come from every cell of the universe. It has not come from the seminal essence of the father or the mother, as it is believed. It is the quintessence of every particle of the whole of Nature, so that the cosmos is reflected in every body. That is why we say, the *Brahmanda* is in the *Pindan-*

da,—the macrocosm is in the microcosm. The cosmos is reverberating and is reflected in the little baby. How, then, can you say that it is your child? It is the child of the universe, which is to take care of it; and it shall withdraw it when it is to be summoned back; it projects it when it is to be sent out for reasons which are known to the universal law alone. Here is the philosophical background of the *Vidya*, called *Panchagni-Vidya.*

The Upanishad, in its exposition of the PanchagniVidya, takes the standpoint of the wider background that operates behind every event in the phenomena of natural processes. Things are not what they seem; there is a deeper significance behind every visible process or activity in Nature. This is the esoteric side, or the invisible aspect of the visible phase of our practical existence. It is not that events suddenly emerge out into visibility, as if by magic, and that something happens at one stroke. Take the case of a thunder, for instance. We do not know how the thunder has burst forth from the clouds. There is an immediate rainfall, there is wind blowing cyclonically. The rain stops, and suddenly it is hot, after it became suddenly cold, when it rained with winds. These are natural phenomena from our point of view, but they are supernatural mysteries to the vision of the Upanishad. There is nothing merely exoteric in the sense of a crass material event in the world. Events take place first in the highest heaven, and then their presence is felt gradually in greater and greater density as they come down to the level of more and more grossness and perceptibility and tangibility, as is the case with a disease. The illness does not manifest itself suddenly in the physical body. It happens inside first. Its seed is sown within. There is some kind of event that is taking place in the depths of our personality, and in the recesses of the world. This impulse is manifest outside as some occurrence.

The cause of a particular event which is ordinarily regarded as normal, physical, personal, social, visible, tangible, etc., this particular thing, has a transcendent secret behind it. This is the great point made out in the Panchagni-Vidya.

The birth of a human being in this world does not take place in this world alone, exclusively. It takes place in the highest regions, first. One is born first in the higher levels in certain degrees of expression, and the impact of this birth is felt in the lower levels until it becomes visible to the physical eye on this mortal earth. Then we say that a child is born, someone has come, there is a rebirth, and so on. But this someone has not come suddenly from the skies. There has been a complicated interior process preceding, which always manages to escape the notice of ordinary vision. This is the case not only with the birth of a human being, but it is so with the coming of every event in the world. The Panchagni-Vidya is not an elucidation of a single phenomenon merely, namely, the organic birth of a human individual in the mother's womb. This is only an instance which is to be extended to phenomena of every kind comprehended in the whole of Nature. There is a total activity, in a subtle form, taking place prior to the apparently individual expression of it in the form of experience and perception.

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(To be continued)

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GAUDAPADA'S PHILOSOPHY OF NON-DUALISM

(SRI MOTI LAL PANDIT)

[Continued from the previous issue]

Even though the objects of empirical cognition may be relatively real, but they turn out to be, from an absolute standpoint, as unreal as the dream-objects or the objects of illusion. In this context it is legitimate to ask as to what, then, is real? The real, for Gaudapada, is the Self alone. Anything that pertains not to the Self is untrue, false and illusory. If the non-dual Self alone is real, then how to account for the multiplicity in the world that we experience and encounter? There is manifoldness in the world because the Self, through the operations of *maya*, appears as many, when in fact no division has occurred in the Absolute. The Self thinks of itself as being many due to its own power of *maya*. If the non-dual Self is real, then what status are we going to accord to the individual self? To the extent the individual self thinks of itself as being limited and separate, it will experience duality everywhere. The moment it recognises itself as being non-different from the eternal Self, the consciousness of difference will vanish by itself.

Insofar as the non-dual character of the Self is concerned, it is explained by Gaudapada in terms of the analogy of space (*akasa*). The non-dual Self is explained as being similar to the cosmic space (*mahakasha*), whereas the limited individual self is linked to the limited space within a jar (*ghatakasha*). The space within the jar and the cosmic space are not essentially different from each other. The space within the jar thinks itself to be different from the cosmic space because of the limitation which the jarness has imposed upon it. Once the limitation is removed, the space within the jar merges with the cosmic space, and so the traces of difference also vanish.

The Self, while appearing as many, does not suffer from any division or modification. As space within the jar does not undergo any modification due to the form, colour or size of the jar, so the non-dual Self suffers from no division when it appears as many. As the space within the jar is identical with the cosmic space, so the limited self of the individual is identical with the non-dual and eternal Self. (As the plurality in and of the world is an adjunct of *maya*, so the indivisible nature of the Self in no manner is affected (*ibid*. 3.39). Since the objects that are constitutive of the world are adjuncts of *maya*, it means that they are not at all originates. That which is not an originate suffers neither from change nor from destruction. Thus is established the theory of *ajati* or non-origination of the world.)

Gaudapada asserts that the doctrine of *ajati* has its source in the *shruti* texts, that is, in the eternal and non-human revelation that is contained in the Vedic texts, particulary in texts called the Upanishads. The Upanishadic texts, says the Acarya, affirm *a priori* the existence of non-dual Self Who is explained as being self-luminous, eternal, and self-evident. Affirming the existence of the non-dual Self, it is but natural for the *shruti* texts to refute such viewpoints which assert difference or plurality in any form. As the nature of the Real is to be one, without a second, it means that the plurality of the world has to be false. It is said to be false on account of it being the projection of *maya*. Since the world is a projection and thereby false, it means that the Real has to be non-dual. The so-called difference that we experience has to be treated as being illusory or false. Thus are upheld such declarations of the *shruti* texts which affirm non-dual nature of the Absolute: "There is no second to *atman* or *brahman*" (*Brh. Up.* 4.3.23). If the Real is non-dual, then from where does difference come from? It comes, so we are told, from the other, and consequently gives rise to fear (*ibid.* 1.4.2). To overcome the fear of the other, we must affirm that "*brahman* alone is real" (*Chand. Up.* 6.2.2). Accordingly we must realise the essence of the statement: "That art thou" (*ibid.* 6.8.16).

The above *shruti*-statements undoubtedly establish the nature of the Real as being non-dual, and thereby implying that difference of any kind must necessarily be false. In relation to causation the *shruti*-statements tell us that Cause alone is real, whereas its effects are apparent or unreal. That which we call as an effect is, for a Vedantin, nothing more than a mere verbal expression or designation. This understanding or analysis would mean that the cause, while giving rise to an apparent effect, does not at all suffer from any internal or external change; it remains the same and identical. The non-modification of the cause is explained by making use of the analogy of clay and the pot. We all know that the pot is made of clay. While giving rise to the pot, the clay remains identical with the state that existed prior to the making of a pot. The clay of the pot and of not-pot remains the same. Since the essence of pot-clay and of not-pot clay does not change, it means that the cause, while giving rise to an effect, remains unchanged. Then what is the pot in itself? It is a mere linguistic expression, a label or designation. The substratum of the pot is but clay.

This and such-like analogies or examples are used to explain the non-dual nature of the Self. The Self, while appearing as many, does not undergo any change like the clay when it is formed into a pot. The objects of the world are, like the pot, mere disignations and not realities in themselves.As the Self is the substratum of the objective universe, it means that It alone has to be considered as real, whereas the universe is to be treated as an apparent manifestation of the Self (*Karika* 3.15, *Chand.* Up. 6.1.4). It is how Gaudapada shows as to how the *shruti* texts support his doctrine of non-origination (*ajati*). They who believe in creation, according to the *Isha Upanishad* (12), "go to utter darkness." As there is no creation, there then is no creator who could be viewed as being the cause of the universe (*Brhd.* Up. 3.9.28).

Granted that there are *shruti*-statements which support the theory of non-creation (*ajati*), but there are equally quite a number of declarations in the Upanishads which speak of difference (*bhedavakya*) or uphold creation to be real: What shall we do with such statements of difference? Such statements, we are told, are not primary statements. They, therefore, must be treated as being figurative (*gauna*). As such, these statements are viewed as instruments (*upaya*) of introducing one to the main body of teaching of the *shruti*-texts, which is that of non-dualism and which is the ultimate goal (*paramartha*) of Vedanta (*Karika* 4.14.15).

While depending upon the *shruti* texts for the explanation of the theory of non-origination, Gaudapada simultaneously makes full use of logical reasoning *(Yukti)* in support of his theory. He offers, like the Madhyamakas, the dialectical critique of causation in terms of a fourfold alternative. The four alternatives are put to such a use as to explain the possible relations between the cause and its effect. The relation between the two can either be of identity or of difference, or of both, or of neither. If the relation between the cause and effect is assumed to be identity, it would mean that causation is continuous as well as effect is nothing but cause itself. What it means is this: cause, even when the effect is actualised, continues to exist in the effect. If this be so, then no causation has taken place. Further it would also mean that the effect is nothing but the transformation of the cause itself like milk transforming itself into curd. It is a view of causation which is mainly advocated by the Samkhya school. This theory of causation is known by the name of *satkaryavada*, or the theory which maintains that the effect, prior to its actualisation, exists potentially in the cause. This kind of causation ultimately turns out to be no causation at all, and so has to be abandoned.

The second theory of causation maintains that there exists difference between the cause and its effect, and so accordingly is called the *asatkaryavada*, or the theory which maintains that the effect does not exist in the cause. As the effect does not exist in the cause, it means that the effect must be treated as a new product. It is the Nyaya-Vaisheshika school which follow this theory of causation. The problem of this theory is: How is it possible for the cause to give rise to an effect when the effect is said to be unrelated to it. There has to be some kind of relation between the two if causation has to be meaningful. Since no relation exists between the two, so the theory has to be abandoned.

The third view of causation is that it is a combination of the first two views, that is, of identity and difference. As both the views have been seen suffering from logical contradictions, so it is futile to speak of the third view concerning causation. Moreover, it is contradictory to say that both identity and difference exist simultaneously in one and the same thing, namely, cause. It is a contradiction to say that contraries can co-exist in one and the same thing. As the theory is logically untenable, so it has to be given up. This combination theory of causation is mainly advocated by the adherents of Jainism. The fourth view concerning causation upholds that no causation at all takes place. Whatever happens in the universe is due to chance. It is a view which the Carvak school follows.

As we have seen that all the four alternatives concerning causation lack logical consistency, so Gaudapada accordingly rejects them all as being meaningless. He rejects these views concerning causation on the following grounds. A thing, according to Gaudapada, can neither produce itself *(svatah)*, nor can it emerge from something *(paratah)*, nor out of both, nor out of neither (*Karika* 4.22). If it is said that the effect exists in the cause prior to its actualisation, then the production of the effect serves no purpose since it is said to be already existing in the cause. There is a mere reduplication, and nothing more than that. If, however, it is said that the effect does not exist in the cause, then how can effect be actualised? So its existence may be linked to the son of a barren woman, which is inexistent. As the barren women's son can neither be born in an illusion nor in a dream, likewise that which is non-existent cannot give rise to that which is existent (*ibid.* 3.28). The third view suffers from identical logical lacunae from which the first two views suffer. Insofar as the fourth view of causation is concerned, it is an absured view and, therefore, need not be taken into consideration. While all the four views of causation cancel each other, they however lead implicitly to the theory of non-origination (*ibid.* 4.3.4). Thus concludes Gaudapada that causation is more apparent than real. It is the non-dual Self which alone is real and which, through the power of *maya*, appears as the many (*ibid.* 3.27).

THE THEORY OF THE SELF

It is *brahman-atman* alone which, for Acarya Gaudapada, is ultimately real, and so is considered as being the foundational Subject. Since absolute and transcendent, the Self thereby is viewed to be eternal, infinite and constant. The Self, in the Upanishadic terms, is defined as being ever-existent truth (*satyam*) which is of the nature of consciousness (*vijnanam*) and bliss (*anandam*). Since the Self is the basis of all that which is phenomenal or which is apprehended through empirical mode of consciousness, it means that It (the Self) needs no external or internal proof to establish Its reality. Its reality is self-proved and self-evident. The Self, on account of its own power of *maya*, appears in the form of individual selves as well as entities that constitute the external or objective world. When the Self appears as that which is external to it, this appearance must be treated as being the projection of *maya* and not its real creation (*srsti*). As the ground of that which is a projection, the Self and the projected entity must not be seen as being different; rather they are identical.

Philosophically or conceptually it may be possible to prove the non-dual nature of Ultimate Reality, but how do we experience it existentially when our day-to-day experiences are constituted by difference? According to Gaudapada, we can experience the Self as non-dual and as non-different from that which It projects through immediate intuition. This transcendental intuition is referred to as *samadhi*, and is arrived at through the practice of *non-contact yoga* (*asparshayoga*). In this indeterminate state (*nirvikalpa-samadhi*) the Self is experienced as being permanent and eternal, whereas the Self as consciousness in the Vijnanvada School is construed as being momentary (*ksanika*). It is for this reason that the Vedantic theory of the Self is spoken as that of *nitya-vada*. It means that the Vedantic idealism is transcendental in orientation, in that it at the same time upholds empirical (*vyavahara*)realism. It denotes that to the extent we function in the world of everyday experience, to that extent dualism is real (*Karika* 3.18). Even though the phenomenal world, from an absolute standpoint, may be false, yet it, from the functional point of view, is real and, therefore, need not be abandoned (*ibid.* 2.5).

(To be continued)

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Prayer generates good spiritual currents and produces tranquillity of the mind. If you pray regularly, your life will be gradually changed and moulded.

—**Swami Sivananda**

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President Swamiji Writes:

TO 'THE DIVINE LIFE' READERS AND THE D.L.S. MEMBERS

Blessed Immortal Atman!
My Beloved Spiritual Brethren of our
global human family,

May peace and joy prevail in your heart. May the light of divinity shine bright in your heart and impart radiance to your life and actions. It is a special joy to resume my communication after one month's gap. Last month February issue did not contain this usual monthly letter. Hence, I welcome this opportunity of this March issue. Before I proceed I would like to draw your attention to a couple of extremely interesting facts regarding this present month. Two months ago the January issue of the Divine Life contained my special New Year message, New Year greetings and goodwishes. The present month of March contains a double feature. Being the last month of the official financial year, March becomes the proclaimer of our financial New Year that commences from 1st April. In addition, it also contains another auspicious New Year, the Hindu religious calendar New Year. This date 28th March is the beginning of a New Year starting with Vasanta Navaratra which contains within itself the most auspicious first religious day of worship, Sri Ramanavami marking the birth anniversary of the ideal divine incarnation, the great Lord Rama. The month of Chaitra starts with a bright fortnight and ushers in the divine birth anniversary of Lord Rama. The advent of Rama Avatara is for establishing the rule of Righteousness and the moral order in this human world. May we pray to the Lord to bless us and help us to establish the rule of righteousness and the moral order within our own hearts as well as within the hearts of all human beings as our global human fraternity is approaching the advent of the 21st century.

Here at this point I wish to share a piece of very good news with all our Divine Life Society members and the general readers. This good news is that Gurudev's Centenary Memorial Hospital in his sacred birthplace, holy Pattamadai has now received from our central government's concerned department, this special exemption under 35 AC. This exemption under 35 AC grants a hundred percent exemption from income tax to all donors. This is valid for a period of 3 years. This special exemption has been given towards the rural social welfare work being done by Swami Sivananda Memorial Trust through its Centenary Charitable Hospital at Pattamadai. As mentioned above this exemption under 35 AC is valid for a period of 3 financial years, within which time the Sivananda Memorial Trust is allowed to raise a sum of 8 Crore Rupees through a concerted fund raising. Readers may think in what way they could assist in this matter. God and Gurudev inspire you. If you wish to know further details of information you may write to:

The Managing Trustee
Swami Sivananda Memorial Trust
B-237, Chancellor's Court, Off V Avenue
Besant Nagar P.O. Madras-600 090

With a duplicate copy to

The Administrator
Swami Sivananda Centenary Charitable Hospital
Kalakkad Road, Pattamadai
Distt. Nelli Kattabomman,
TamilNadu-627 453

Another subject I wish to draw your attention is about a ten page typed letter, copies of which are despatched all over India mainly to accuse this servant of Gurudev and condemn him as a dangerous criminal person who is carrying on not only unethical and immoral activity but is also doing harmful antinational work and therefore, deserves to be put in jail. Thousands of copies of this letter are being mailed urging that prompt strict action should be taken by concerned bodies like C.B.I. etc. in the interest of public safety and national welfare. This letter is typed, and does not bear any handwritten signature. But, the name Asheshananda similarly typed appears at the end of the letter. My main purpose in narrating this is to request all members and readers to collectively pray for God's compassionate blessings upon this ASHESHANANDA for graciously bringing him into the right path. Simultaneously, worship may be offered in his name and on behalf of any other persons who may be helping him in his campaign of "Dharmarakshana" or safeguarding of Dharma. May God bless him and show him the right path.

I am obliged to bring this to the readers' notice because Sivananda Ashram, Muni-Ki-Reti, the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society is also declared to be a place of conspiracy and intrigue that pose a grave national risk etc. This is unfortunate and a matter of regret because, this person Asheshananda has been for some years a resident of Sivananda Ashram, Muni-Ki-Reti some years back. So far, we have not brought this to your attention and notice. But, now Gurudev's institution itself has come under his attack in his letter mentioned above. I appeal to all the readers and members to pray for his Sanmati.

This present letter of mine has been in a somewhat negative note. Let us conclude it in a useful, positive and elevating and inspiring note. This is a duty and privilege of all good thinking people. I share with you certain lofty and sublime ideas which I came across. This is sure to be a wonderful nourishment psychologically as well as spiritually. Here is an inspiring and revealing outpouring of a thinker from Gujarat. This is actually an English rendering from a Gujarati language original composition.

Even if I take vows,
eat only once a day or even fast;
But if anger and jealousy are
not rooted out from my mind;
My austerity is not true.

Even if I visit temple, offer flowers,
garland the deity, roll the rosary;
But if selfishness, greed and delusion are
not rooted out of my actions;
My rituals are not true.

Even when I do japa,
join the Satsang, perform meditation;
But egoism, pride and feeling of superiority are
not rooted out from within me;
My worship is not true.

Even if I go into seclusion,
Embrace Vairagya, observe silence;
But if my desires and instincts are not controlled,
my body consciousness is not reduced;
My Sadhana is not true.

O Lord, even when I pray and utter Your name;
But if love, compassion, friendliness and joy are
not manifested in my life;
My relationship with you is not genuine.

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Next as a conclusion to this month's communication with you I present to you a sublime utterance of a lofty spiritual truth uttered by an American Red Indian tribal chief. This is an unforgettable piece. Eversince I set my eyes upon it, it has thrilled me to the very core. In his awesome loftiness it is in no way less than the revelation of any one of our ancient Upanishadic seers of divine enlightenment. Today's Modern America is now discovering that these original natives of the American continent whom the European white settlers regarded as uncivilised savages, were a highly evolved people with rare insights into Nature and had a sublime philosophy of their own. Here is what Chief Black Elk has to say.

The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realise their relationship, their oneness, with the universe and all its powers, and when they realise that at the centre of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that this centre is really everywhere, it is within each of us.

My beloved spiritual brethren, I now leave you to ponder these two inspiring and sublimely uplifting expressions of wisdom, light and beauty. May you enrich yourself hereby. May God bless you.

With Regards, Prem and Om.

Swami Chidananda

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Information has been received that the Madurai Branch of The Divine Life Society in Tamil Nadu, is going to arrange celebration of the Diamond Jubilee Anniversary of the Branch, after completion of Sixty years of noble service, spiritually, culturally as well as socially, in the year 1998. Devotees all over are requested to contact the Organisers of this function in Madurai, at their address: 16, Sembi Kinatru Street, Near North Avani Moola Street, Madurai—625 001, Tamil Nadu State, for further details. Here is a blessed occasion, in which all will feel happy to participate in the name of Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

5th March, 1998

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

YOGA-VEDANTA FOREST ACADEMY (THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY),

P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR, Pin: 249 192, Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, U.P., (India)

ADMISSION NOTICE

Applications are hereby invited for undergoing Thirtieth residential YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE of two months' duration, i.e., from 17th August to 15th October, 1998. This Course will be held in the Academy premises at the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar, Rishikesh.

The details are as follows:

1. It is open to Indian citizens (Men) only. The classes are for admitted applicants who have been duly registered as students for the course.
2. Age Group: Between 20 and 60 Years.
3. Qualifications:
   - (a) Preferably Graduate with keen spiritual aspiration and deep interest in the practice of Yoga-Vedanta.
   - (b) Must be able to converse in English fluently.
   - (c) Should have sound health.
4. Duration of the Course:—Two months' residential Course on Yoga, Vedanta and cultural values.
5. Scope and syllabus of the Course:
   - (a) An outline study of History of Indian and Western Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, Studies in Religious Consciousness, the Philosophy of the Bhagavadgita, Patanjali's Yoga System, Narada Bhakti Sutras and the Philosophy of Swami Sivananda.
   - (b) Practical:—Asana, Pranayama, Meditation and Karma Yoga, Lectures, Group discussions, Class Test, Questions and Answers, final examination will form part of the Course.
   - (c) There is provision for teaching of Elementary Sanskrit to the students as an optional Subject. Those who are interested can join this Sanskrit class also.

6. There will be no charges for training, boarding and lodging. Pure vegetarian food (Breakfast and two meals a day only) will be provided. Smoking, drinking and use of intoxicants are strictly prohibited.

7. Application form duly filled in should reach the undersigned by 10th July, 1998. The aim of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy is not merely an academic equipment of students, but to prepare the students for a successful life in the world and to facilitate the living of a wholesome life with an integrated personality. The Course conducted in this Academy is more of the nature of an all-round discipline than merely providing students with scriptural learning or textual information.

For the application form and prospectus please write to:

THE REGISTRAR,
The Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy
The Divine Life Society,
P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192
Distt: Tehri-Garhwal, Uttar Pradesh
Himalayas, INDIA

Shivanandanagar
March, 1998

Note:— **(i) The selected student alone is expected to come. He is not permitted to bring along any other family member or relative with him.**
(ii) The above syllabus (vide 5) is subject to slight alterations without previous notice, in case such a need arises.

[Continued from Cover ii]

5 Ananta Chaturdasi
6 Purnima
7 Mahalaya (Pitri) Paksha begins
8 111th Birthday Anniversary of His Holiness Sri Swami Sivananda
16 Ekadasi
18 Pradosha Puja
20 Amavasya; Mahalaya (Pitripaksha) Amavasya
21 Sri Navaratri Puja begins
28 Sri Sarasvati Avahana
29 Sri Durga Ashtami; Sri Maha Navami
30 Sri Navaratri Puja concludes

OCTOBER

1 Vijaya Dasami
2 Ekadasi
3 Pradosha Puja
5 Purnima; Rasa Lila
16 Ekadasi
17 Pradosha Puja
19 Sri Naraka Chaturdasi
20 Amavasya; Dipavali; Sri Lakshmi Puja
21 Sri Govardhana Puja; Sri Go-Puja; Sri Bali-Puja
26 Sri Skanda Shashthi *(According to Tamil Calendar)*
31 Ekadasi (Prabodhini)

NOVEMBER

1 Utthana Dvadasi; Sri Tulasi Puja; Chaturmasya Vrata ends; Pradosha Puja
3 Sri Vaikuntha Chaturdasi
3/4 Purnima; Sri Guru Nanak Jayanti
14 Ekadasi
16 Pradosha Puja; Punyatithi of Sri Jnanesvar Maharaj
18/19 Amavasya
25 Sri Skanda Shashthi *(According to Sanskrit Calendar)*
30 Ekadasi; Sri Bhagavadgita Jayanti

DECEMBER

1 Pradosha Puja
3 Purnima; Sri Dattatreya Jayanti; 55th Anniversary of Akhanda Mahamantra Sankirtana Yajna in Shivanandanagar
14 Ekadasi
16 Pradosha Puja
18 Amavasya
24 Christmas Eve
25 Christmas Day
29 Ekadasi
30 Pradosha Puja
31 55th Anniversary of Pratishtha Mahotsava of Sri Visvanatha Mandir in Shivanandanagar

1999

JANUARY

1/2 Purnima
13 Ekadasi
14 Makara Sankranti (After 6-00 p.m.)
15 Uttarayana Punyakala; Pradosha Puja
17 Amavasya
22 Vasanta Panchami
24 Ratha Saptami
25 Sri Bhishma-Ashtami
26 Sri Madhva Navami
27 Ekadasi
29 Pradosha Puja
31 Purnima

FEBRUARY

12 Ekadasi
13 Pradosha Puja
14 Sri Mahasivaratri
15/16 Amavasya
26 Ekadasi
27 Pradosha Puja

MARCH

1/2 Purnima; Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu Jayanti; Holi
13 Ekadasi
15 Pradosha Puja
17 Amavasya

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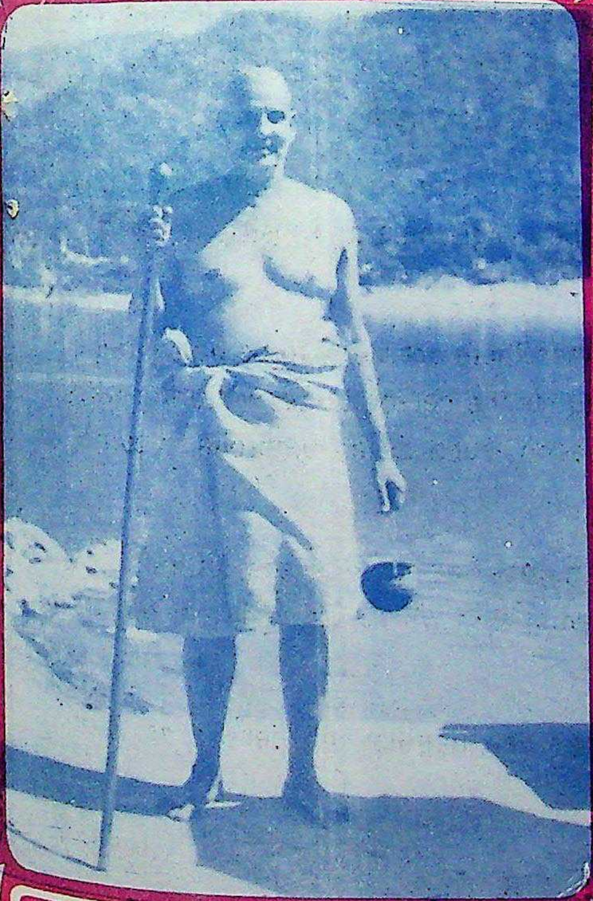

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Mercy is the might of the righteous. Viveka is the weapon of the aspirant. Vairagya is the armour of Mumukshus.

—SWAMI SIVANANDA

5/98

SRI GURU PURNIMA, SADHANA WEEK AND THE SACRED PUNYATITHI ARADHANA OF SRI GURUDEV SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

The Holy Sri Guru Purnima will be observed at the Headquarters-Ashram on the 9th of July, 1998.

The Anniversary of the Punyatithi Aradhana of Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj will be celebrated on the 18th of July, 1998.

In between the above two sacred functions, there will be a Spiritual Conference, known as Sadhana Week, for Seven days continuously, with programmes every day in the early morning, forenoon, afternoon and night. There will be valuable discourses by Mahatmas, Saints and Scholars for the benefit of all spiritual seekers.

Devotees who intend to participate in the above programmes, are requested to write to us, giving full details of the number of persons arriving, so that the information may reach us not later than the 20th of June, 1998.

Persons with any kind of physical handicap or serious health problem, may consider to avoid the strain of this concentrated programme and visit the Ashram at any other time.

The period will be the monsoon season when there are likely to be heavy rains in this area. As such, devotees who are coming for the celebrations, will bring with them necessary requirements befitting the season, such as an umbrella, a torch, and the like.

Due to difficulty in accommodating large number of persons, the Ashram has to request for rooms from neighbouring Ashrams, with which arrangement guests will kindly adjust themselves, lovingly.

It will also be very good if DLS Branches can depute one person as their representative, to participate in the function.

May Sri Gurudev's Blessings be upon all!

Shivanandanagar, U.P.
1st May, 1998.

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

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5/98

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सनत्सुजातीयम्

न च्छन्दांसि वृजिनात्तारयन्ति मायाविनं मायया वर्तमानम् ।
नीडं शकुन्ता इव जातपक्षाश्छन्दांस्येनं प्रजहन्त्यन्तकाले ॥

Na chhandamsi vrijinattarayanti mayavinam mayaya vartamanam,
Needam sakunta iva jatapakshas'chhandamsyenam prajahantyantakale.

The Vedas do not protect a hypocrite (who studies the Vedas but does not desist from sinful acts) from his sins. They leave him at the time of his death like the birds which leave their nests after their wings are developed.

–*Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, ii-5*

AIDS TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

While sincerity is a fundamental requisite on the spiritual path, its misapplication could be dangerous. Sincerity without right discernment is of little use, and right discernment or discriminative understanding could come only through experience, study, meditation and company of the wise.

After having read a few Vedantic texts or the *Tao Te Ching*, some aspirants tend to become megalomaniacs, and immediately put up granite walls on the path of progress.

SEEING GOD IN ALL

Beholding God in all, or feeling His presence everywhere, is a perpetual experience of the realised souls alone (and one could hardly find a single one of them in tens of millions). It can only form a part of one's spiritual endeavour, but when the aspirant becomes puffed up with the notion that he is seeing God in all, he, in fact, experiences his inflated ego.

When there is so much of impurity in the heart, when the mind is so very confused, when selfishness is the ruling whip, it is absurd to talk of beholding God in all. Without scaling the foothills, you cannot climb the Everest.

As the purity of mind increases, and when the senses are withdrawn, one *could* momentarily be aware of the presence of God within and without, but that is only a transitory experience, the duration of which depends on the extent of *sadhana*, but as soon as the mind descends upon the physical plane, as it must, dragged down by the force of its *karmas*, one cannot help acting in accordance with their characteristics.

IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE

Spiritual disciplines, therefore, are of fundamental importance for every single aspirant. It is ludicrous to talk in terms of the absolute Reality when the savage within jumps up at the slightest provocation. It is equally fantastic to say, "I am neither man, nor woman; immortal soul am I," when one is not even a human being within, but a ferocious animal, ruled by strong likes and dislikes, morbid self-centredness, hate and infatuation.

Never forget the importance of self-discipline. It does not mean suppression, but taming the brute within. It means humanisation of the animal, and spiritualisation of the human. It means cleansing of impurities, sublimation of the lower urges, not their repression.

Patanjali did not begin his *Yogasutras* with lessons on *samadhi* or superconsciousness. Do not forget that. He did not even talk of concentration and meditation (*dharana* and *dhyana*) without having laid emphasis on *pratyahara* or withdrawal of the senses from external objects. He did not think of *pratyahara* without steadiness of posture

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and regulation of breath (*asana* and *pranayama*). He did not think of spiritual life without *yama* and *niyama*. Never forget that.

FIRST STEPS FIRST

Vedanta does not ask you to think in terms of *Sivoham* or *Soham*, if you do not possess the "four means" or the *Sadhana-chatushtaya*. These "four means" constitute a vast part of *sadhana*, after which alone one could regard oneself as a Vedantin.

The path of devotion does not stress on *para bhakti* (a state in which the meditator and the meditated upon are one), unless one has achieved a great deal by purifying the heart through the repetition of the Lord's name, steadying the mind through meditation on His form, and cleansing the impurities through divine worship and service.

Without *yama* and *niyama*, or the "four means," or prayer, recitation of the divine name, meditation, service and cultivation of virtues, it is just nonsense to talk in superlative terms of Self-realisation, or say that you are neither a man nor a woman or that you love the Self in all beings equally.

'YAMA-NIYAMA'

Never forget the importance of *yama* and *niyama*. *Yama* means self-restraint, taming the animal within. Patanjali cites five *yamas* or restrains. They are: (1) abstinence from injury in any form; (2) truthfulness; (3) continence; (4) abstinence from depriving others of anything that is theirs; and (5) abstinence from avariciousness *(ahimsa, satya, brahmacharya, asteya, aparigraha).*

Self-restraint is basic to Yoga. You cannot have balance of mind without restraint and sublimation of the lower urges. There is so much of violence in life—in thought, word and deed. Not a single day passes when one does not hurt another in some form or other. A single act of injury destroys a good deal of one's *sadhana*.

VIOLENCE INEXCUSABLE

Even in saints violence is inexcusable. You can only call such rare lapses in them as temporary loss of spiritual balance, as Dr. Radhakrishnan says when referring to Jesus Christ's act of whipping the money-lenders. In individual relationship, to take recourse to violence in order to justify a so-called spiritual reason, is inexcusable.

It is a different matter when one has to act in self-defence, or when there is danger to life, or when one has to fight for defending one's country, but to justify violence in the name of spirituality is outrageous.

Truthfulness does not mean speaking the truth in a mechanical way. One may speak the truth and yet follow the path of untruth. Truth-speaking, when it brings harm to another, or hurts the feelings of another, becomes a contradiction of truth by effecting violence. Truthfulness covers integrity, abiding by the ideal of justice, never swerving from the path of honesty. The path of truth is an austere path.

CONTINENCE

Continence does not merely mean physical celibacy. It is mainly indicative of the purity of life that is dedicated to God (*brahmacharya*). The heart must be pure, free from ill-will and hate. The mind must be free from impure thoughts. The sex-urge should be intelligently disciplined. There should be no repression, but sublimation.

For a *sannyasin, brahmacharya* means a life-long vow of celibacy; for a householder it means regulation and discipline of his vital urges, and fulfilling them to the extent necessary, while not being their slave.

You would yourself know the importance of the different kinds of restraints and their benefic influence on your life, in general, as you progress on the spiritual path.

SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES

Yama and *niyama* go together. *Niyama* means observance—any kind of observance directed to help spiritual unfoldment. Patanjali cites five observances: (1) internal and external purity; (2) contentment; (3) austerity; (4) study of scriptures; and (5) worship of God or self-surrender *(saucha, santosha, tapas, swadhyaya, ishwara-pranidhana).*

The body and mind must be kept clean. If the thoughts are pure, only then could there be mental poise. If the body is dirty, the mind also will be slovenly. Contentment is a result of mature understanding, not a state of resignation. The heart should be peaceful, and the hands active in the service of God, which means service of one's fellow-beings.

Austerity, not only means discipline of the body to heat and cold to a certain extent, but balance of mind in pleasure and pain. Austerity, like *asana* and *pranayama*, is only a means, and should not be made a fetish.

WORSHIP

It is not necessary to detail the importance of widening the horizon of one's knowledge through study, observation, meditation and the company of the wise. Worship of God means any form of worship suited to one's temperament. Cultivation of the qualities associated with God, such as mercy, compassion, forgiveness, justice, tolerance, and so on, is one of the finest forms of worship.

Self-surrender does not mean irresponsibility and inertia, but offering of oneself to the Divine, which indicates a complete process of self-cleansing (you do not offer a soiled flower in worship) and freedom from egotism, vanity and pride.

'FOUR MEANS'

The *four means*, on the path of Jnana Yoga, embody in them many of the principles of *yama* and *niyama*. *Viveka* or discriminative understanding is given the first importance; then *vairagya* or dispassion for sense-objects. Without these, spiritual life is just a mockery.

The third means is termed *shat-sampat*, or six-fold virtues, namely, *shama, dama, uparati, titiksha, sraddha* and *samadhana.*

Shama is tranquillity of mind effected through eradication of cravings, renunciation of mundane desires. It is interrelated with *dama* which means control of the senses.

Uparati is satiety, born of discriminative understanding; it means a state of self-withdrawal, in which the mind does not function through the means of external objects.

Titiksha, or austerity—physical and mental—has already been referred to. The practice of the formula, "Adapt, adust, accommodate; bear insult, bear injury," is a great *titiksha.*

Sraddha means faith, which is like a keel that balances the boat of life, while *viveka* corresponds to rudder, and *mumukshutwa,* or desire for liberation, to propeller. Faith in God, faith in oneself, faith in the Guru, faith in the wise teachings, faith in all that is good and noble, is the sap of life.

Samadhana is the result of the five of the six-fold virtues, which means "self-settledness," a state of perfect balance, an unruffled state of mind, free from likes and dislikes, love and hate, doubt and despair. It is also an independent virtue which must be cultivated by patient practice, and, however momentarily one might experience it, one should try to attain it during meditation and at other times, too.

MOTIVE-POWER

Mumukshutwa means intense longing for freedom from the cycle of births and deaths, a burning desire for Self-realisation. It is the motive-power in all *sadhanas,* the propelling factor that pushes you along the path. If this is lacking, *sadhana* becomes static.

Remember these aids to spiritual progress. Never underestimate them. Do not delude yourself. Let no one call you a symbol of vanity or an egotist, for there could be nothing worse than spiritual vanity or egotism justified in the name of spirituality. Take care of the details, and the major factor will take care of itself. You have to plod on and scale many hills. You cannot climb the Everest in one jump. There is no jumping on the spiritual path.

* * *

DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

Do not be puffed up with your knowledge. Be humble. Learn Brahma Vidya or the knowledge of the Self. This science can be learnt only by those who have humility. You must give up all intoxicants—including the intoxication of false learning. What you have learned is only a handful; you have still to learn an oceanful. You should acquire the supreme knowledge. This Brahma Vidya alone can make you immortal. That alone will bestow on you strength. Sow the seed now.

—**Swami Sivananda**

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THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

No one can deny the need for guidance in order to achieve proficiency in any aspect of life. From a rudimentary state one progresses to a state of unique achievement. A child begins with addition and multiplication and, later on, becomes a brilliant mathematician. He is able to do so only with the help of a succession of teachers.

Self-effort, of course, does play a dominant role. There is also the question of the presence of the seeds of an innate genius, in need of unfoldment and fruition. Yet, it is within the scope of everyone to attain the highest state in any field, if not today, then tomorrow, if not in this birth, then in the next.

If you want to climb a hill, you have to plod on yourself, but you also need the help of someone who knows the path, and who can lead you to the summit through the safest route. Similar is the role of the *guru,* the spiritual guide.

Life abounds with numerous teachers. Every object, every occurrence, everything has a lesson to teach. But there is also the basic need for a personal guide, with whom one could forge a sense of belonging, repose absolute trust and confidence, and hold him in high veneration, so as to prepare oneself psychologically to reap maximum benefit from his spiritual guidance.

Expansion is the sign of life. In nature there is nothing static. Everything in this universe is set on a pattern that conditions the evolutionary process, until a cycle of creation is completed and returns to the creator. Human life is a means through which numerous souls in bondage can find release, and return to their original source, the supreme reality.

The life-principle in the mineral matter passes on to the life-form in the various strata of vegetation, mosses, plants and trees, their life-form again evolving into and passing through the animal kingdom, until they are embodied as human beings. The law of Karma or action and reaction sets in as soon as the soul finds a human form, for it is only man who is endowed with the faculty of reasoning between right action and wrong action, and, therefore, is held responsible for his fate.

Then onward the momentum of man's individual evolutionary process is in his hands. By leading a good life he can attain a better life, and by leading a bad life he brings upon himself a life of suffering. Since nobody wants to suffer, suffering being contrary to the inherent nature of the soul, man always wants to move forward, consciously or unconsciously, from a state of inadequacy and affliction to a state of fulfilment and eternal bliss.

Experience in life shows that material

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objects cannot give one a sense of adequacy and fulfilment. Hence spiritual quest is not something which is unnatural to life. The urge for it must generate within everyone, if not today, then tomorrow, if not in this life, then in the next.

It is the spiritual guide who quickens the evolutionary process of man. He opens up before the seeker the avenues through which the realisation of the divine can be attained. The *guru* guides the aspirant, not only on the path of Sadhana, but in shaping the pattern of his material life as well.

The relationship between the *guru* and the disciple is extremely sacred. On one side there are deep understanding, protective care and keen interest for the other's betterment, and on the other side, sincerity of purpose, trust, obedience and assiduous application.

There is something predestined in forging a true relationship between the *guru* and the disciple. When there is an ardent longing for self-realisation, the grace of God automatically leads the disciple to the feet of the right *guru*. As in the case of every other relationship, there is also mutuality in this. The response of the *guru* cannot but be commensurate to the devotion and sincerity of the disciple.

It is, indeed, very rare to find a *guru* of the highest realisation. Even if one is not able to benefit from the direct guidance of such a *guru*, one should practise the teachings he has given to humanity, while selecting a course of Sadhana in the light of one's personal experience. Anyone, who has a greater degree of experience in the spiritual path, can be of help to the neophyte.

The foundational principles of spiritual life are common. In most of the scriptures they are uncontradictory. The ethical base is of primary importance.

Be sincere, truthful, practical and resourceful. The weak and the lazy have no place in the spiritual path. You must build up the strength of character in order to achieve anything in life. Deserve before you desire. Do something practical, substantial. The *guru's* help will automatically come.

May the grace of God, the supreme *guru*, be upon you all.

* * *

SECRET OF GOD-REALISATION

The Lord's blessings are ever with His devotees whoever chant His sweet names and who work in the world as His instruments. Enthrone Him in your heart. Merge yourself in Him. Continuous remembrance of the Lord is the secret of success in life and God-realisation.

—Swami Sivananda

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VAISHVANARA VIDYA

(SRI SWAMI KRISHNANANDA)

[Continued from the Previous Issue]

Bondage is due to the connection of our consciousness, or the soul, we may say, with the report of the senses, which is confirmed by the activity of the mind and the intellect. The mind, the intellect and the senses work together in collaboration in giving us a wrong idea about things. The first mistake is committed by the senses. The mind and the intellect only corroborate and confirm in a more synthesised manner this report of the senses. The report is wrong in the sense that it does not take into consideration the invisible factors involved in the production of an effect. The clouds do not gather in the sky suddenly. There are many causes which are beyond one's comprehension, which come together into action for the production of single effect called the appearance of the clouds in the sky, and the fall of the rain, etc. So is the case with everything. So is the case with anything that happens anywhere in the world; so is the case with anything that appears as an effect or a person in the world; so is anything, whatever anyone can think of in one's mind in this world.

These are the oblations symbolically offered in the sacrifice of meditation called the Panchagni-Vidya. This is a secret which the Kshatriyas knew and the Brahmanas did not know. King Pravahana Jaivali was reluctant to part with this knowledge because it was a guarded secret for him and for his community. And now he exposed this knowledge to the Brahmana known as Gautama who came to him as a student, and having explained in detail these mystical doctrines of meditation,—the Panchagni-Vidya,—he concluded by saying that the food oblation offered in the Fire of Man, which gets converted into the seed, is what rises up as the child by birth. This was one of the questions the king put to the boy who approached him in the court.

The first oblation is the universal vibration in the celestial Heaven; that is the first sacrifice, and that is the first oblation. The second oblation is in the second sacrifice which is the reverberation of the vibrations in the celestial Region felt in the lower regions of the Atmosphere, as the fall of the Rain. The grosser manifestations which are the events that take place in this world are the third oblation. The fourth sacrifice is of Man himself, who is involved in this entire activity, who consumes the food of the world and energises himself and produces virility. The fifth oblation is Woman whose union with Man brings about the birth of a child. These are the five Fires. These Fires are not to be regarded as individual events. This is the purpose of the Vidya in the Upanishad. The Fires so called are diviner manifestations of a cosmic character, and there is nothing local, physical, earthly or binding in any of these sacrifices. They are all processes of a vaster Nature in which the individual is integrally involved. The conception of the entire process should therefore be one of a Universal Occurrence, and by an extension of meaning, this is at once a description of events taking place in any manner, apart from the particular ones mentioned specially in these enunciations, in these passages.

The fifth oblation is the immediate cause of the rise of the effect in the form of the baby that lies in the womb of the mother. Here, the womb of the mother need not necessarily mean the human mother, though the description is human, to serve as a sample of the illustration. Any cause which gives birth to an effect is the mother that produces the child. Now, in the case of the human being particularly, the child lies in the womb for some months, say nine or ten months. It sees the light of day and begins to see things through the senses. It begins to work in the world as an individual, so-called. Then it lives in the world for so long as it is permitted to live by the momentum of its actions of previous lives.

There is a determining factor of the span of life of an individual even when it is in the womb of the mother. It cannot be increased or decreased; it is set for ever by the particular force of the *Apurva,* mentioned earlier, which becomes responsible for the birth of an individual. There are causes and causes. All of them join together and pass a resolution, as it were, in their meeting, as to how long an individual should live. That is determined by the character of the cumulative effect of the actions known as the *Apurva,* part of which alone is allowed to manifest itself as what we call *Prarabdha-Karma* (force which has already fructified into experience). The *Prarabdha* is the cause of everything that we experience in this life, the length of life, the nature of the experiences through which we pass, the circumstances into which we are born, etc. All our pleasures and pains, including length of life, are determined by the actions we performed earlier, portions of which are allotted for experience in this particular life, that portion being called the *Prarabdha-Karma.*

Just because a person is born into this world, it does not mean that he is dissociated from the prior causes, ultimately. The causes catch hold of the effects at every level. They can never be freed from connection with their causes. Even when there is a descent into the lowest level, the connection with the higher levels is not snapped. It is always there. We may be said to be aberrant from the realm of God in a sense. We have cut ourselves off from the Universal Being, due to which we are supposed to be bound souls, but it does not really mean that we have severed our connection with God. Our connection still is maintained, with everything, with other beings, with Nature, and with God. What has happened is that we are unconscious of this existing connection; the connection can never be broken. It is a perpetual relationship. If it had been temporary, it would not be reinstated once again. It is always there, but we are completely oblivious of the presence of this relation. Such is what happens at the birth of an individual who is completely ignorant of what has happened. Causes and causes, perhaps thousands and thousands in number, have joined together through the various levels of manifestation, for the birth of this child, all of which is not known to this child. It knows nothing except the little locality where it is born, and all other aspects of its birth in this particular world are forgotten at one stroke due to the association of consciousness with the body in a very intensified manner. The intensity with which the consciousness gets tied up to the body is such that there is a complete obliteration of the memory of past lives, a total ignorance of everything that happened in the earlier incarnations, and there is an attachment to this particular body only, as if that is the only reality,--as if there was nothing before, and there is nothing going to be in the future also! Unfortunate situation, indeed, is this, that nothing is known about the past and nothing is going to be known about the future. The entire chain is forgotten. Only a single link is caught hold of, and consciousness is bound hard to this particular link, and this is the earthly, the physical life of the individual.

When the span of life is finished, there is what we call the death of the body, the extrication of the Prana from the individual embodiment. And these Fires take the individual to the destination to which it is bound after death. Again, these Fires are there in action; they are never absent at any time. Wherever you go, the law of the country works; you cannot escape the arms of the law. Just because you have moved away a hundred miles, it does not mean that you are free from its operation. Likewise is the operation of the five Fires. Wherever you go, they are there, because, without them nothing can take place. The five Fires are nothing but the five degrees of the manifestation of universal law. So, how can you escape it? Wherever you are, in whatever realm, in any form of birth whatsoever, these laws operate, and they catch hold of you, and condition you to certain limited forms of life.

In the same way as one was pushed into manifestation into this particular life, one is put out of existence here, and then taken through the very same process of manifestation into other realms. The process is the same, because the five Fires work everywhere in all the realms of being.

Those who know the secret of this Panchagni-Vidya, those who know the doctrine of the five Fires, those who conduct their lives through meditation in this manner, are liberated from the bondage of *Karma*. They pass through the stages of ascent leading to the higher regions of life, ultimately landing in Brahma-Loka, or the realm of the Creator, for the purpose of ultimate liberation, or salvation; otherwise, there is return, once again, by way of reincarnation, or rebirth. If you are not to be reborn into this world of suffering, you cannot live like an animal, thinking like an animal, seeing like an animal and living a conditioned existence in the same way as animals live in the jungle. Ignorance of law is no excuse. You shall be punished with the rod of the inexorable law for any ignorance of its requirements, and ignorance is nothing but the inability to visualise the connection that obtains between us and the various causes of our manifestation throughout the universe. Since no one can claim to have such knowledge, it appears that everyone is bound to reincarnate in some form. This is the pitiable consequence of the ignorance of the *Jiva*, the individual, to which reference will be made towards the end of this section. But those who are fortunate enough to be awakened to the fact of this divine connection of human life and meditate in this manner through the Panchagni-Vidya,—they shall be taken to the higher regions by diviner forces, through the *Northern Path,* or the *Uttarayana Marga,* the path of light.

The *Archiradi-Marga,* or the Devayana, the Northern Path of the gods, of the celestials, the path of the liberation of the spirit from the bondage of Samsara, is being described. Those who meditate like this, those who live the spiritual life of knowledge, those who have an insight into the secret mentioned here in this Upanishad, those who practise austerity *(Tapas),* endowed with the great faith *(Shraddha)* in the efficacy of this knowledge, they rise to the realm of the divine *Agni,* or the Deity of Fire, on departing from this world. They are carried to a higher realm by the Deity of the Flame, or Fire, and from there they are taken up to the still higher realm of the Deity of the *Day.* There, again, the matter does not end; they go higher up to the realm of the Deity which superintends over the *bright half* of the lunar month. From there, again, they go higher up into the realm of the Deity of the six months during which *Sun moves to the North.* Then they go higher up to the Deity which superintends over the entire *year.* Then, further, they go to *Sun,* which is a very important halting place, as it is said, in the passage of the soul to liberation. Then the soul goes higher up into the more subtle regions of experience and enjoyment of a divine nature, comparable to cool *lunar radiance.* Then comes the realm which the Upanishad calls the Flash of *lightning* represented by its Deity. This is not the lightning that we see in the sky, but the flash of the lightning of the knowledge of Reality. We are on the borderland of the Creator, as it were. There the light flashes, and then the individuality is about to drop. Effort ceases there and some other law begins to take the soul by hand. A super-human force begins to work there, an *Amanava-Purusha,* a super-human being comes there. Someone comes and recognises you, "lo, the exile has come, the prodigal son has returned." Such is the joy of the gods when this exiled being returns after years and years of suffering. The super-human being catches hold of you by the hand and leads you along the path of light, higher and higher, until you are taken to the realm of the Creator Himself, the *Brahma-Loka.* This is the path of light; this is the path of freedom; this is the path of liberation.

But, if people are unable to live such a spiritual life, cannot live a life of meditation like this, have no knowledge whatsoever of the higher truths of life, then, though they have done yet some good deeds in this world, they are good persons, very charitable, very philanthropic, very serviceful, have done a lot of social welfare work, of public utility, with the virtues which are highly praised in the scriptures, and have accumulated the merits of what are known as *Ishta* and *Purta,* i.e., performing great sacrifices and philanthropic deeds of various types,--such good people who have accumulated merit by means of virtue here, they *do not* go along the path of light. Rather, they go along the Southern Path of return. This is called the path of *smoke,* or Dhuma-Marga, Dakshina-Patha, or the Southern movement, which is, again, presided over by divinities. From the Deity of the Smoke there is a rise of the soul to the Deity of the *Night;* then to the Deity of the *dark half* of the lunar month; then to the Deity of the six months during which the *Sun moves to the South*. Then what happens? It does not go to the realm of the Deity which superintends over the year. Especially, this mention is made here, and this is something mystical and peculiar. Why do they not go there? One thing is missed there. This is the departing place of the two paths. For some distance they go together; afterwards they depart, one goes to the North, another goes to the South. The juncture is the Deity of the year which is not touched by the soul that goes to the Southern regions.

From there, the soul goes to the world of the *Fathers,* not to the Sun. Then, from there it goes to the realm of *Space, Akasa;* and from there to the moon, *Chandra-Loka.* In the *Chandra-Loka,* it is supposed to enjoy the privileges of the gods, yet like a *Visa-holder,* not being a citizen of that region, and so it is subject to return. It is subservient to the gods who are gods by birth. The gods that are gods right from the time of creation are superior to the gods that have become such temporarily on account of the virtuous deeds performed in this life. So, when the meritorious deeds are exhausted, the soul returns. It cannot live there permanently. It is subservient, being a celestial of an inferior category. The soul, here, is not for the citizenship of this world, though it has got all the privileges of enjoyment and living. You can have the same boarding, same lodging, and everything, but no privileges or rights! This is because of the fact that you are temporarily raised to the status of a celestial on account of the good acts that you have performed. But when the momentum of the acts finishes there, then what happens? You are, once again, the poor man that you were; you come back in the same way as you went. And so, even when you go there you are not on a par with the gods who were there right from the time of creation. On acount of this fact, it is said that the soul there is like a food, as it were, to the gods; it is eaten by them, which means to say, it is subservient to them and they are superior to it. As long as you are permitted to live in the celestial region by the momentum of the good deeds that you performed in this world, so long you live there. Then you come back through the same path you went. You will be hurried back. The soul comes back to the *space* through which it rose up; then it comes down to the realm of *air,* with which it gets identified very subtly. Then it comes down to the levels of *smoke,* the *clouds* and the *rain.* And one knows the whole process.

These souls which are to return to the mortal world get identified in a subtle manner by their subtle bodies through these natural phenomena, viz., *space, air, cloud, rain* and *food-stuff,* even upto the *grains* like sesamum and barley, beans, rice and wheat, herbs, plants and trees, etc. It is very difficult to understand how they get mixed up with these things. In a very subtle form, these souls are supposed to get identified with these natural things. And they get into the body of the individual through the food-stuff with which they have been identified. Then the same process of birth takes place. The individual soul has come from the above, after finishing its career of enjoyment due to the performance of good deeds here. The soul gets identified in every manner, in every way characteristically, with the particular level through which it has to pass. It is difficult to get out of this existence, says the Upanishad *(Ato vai khalu durnishprapataram.)* Once it enters into these lower levels of grain, food-stuff, etc., one cannot say what will happen to it afterwards. Perhaps God knows what happens; ordinarily this secret cannot be known. It is a very complicated situation. Where will the soul be driven, in what direction, into the womb of which mother, for what type of experience, no one can say. The way of action and reaction is difficult to understand. The descended soul gets identified with these levels; it becomes one with the father, one with the mother, one with the social life into which it is born. And then it begins to say: "This is my mother; this is my father; this is my house; this is my property." It forgets everything that happened earlier. It really belongs to wider regions; it has many friends in the other realms of being; it is a citizen of a vaster world; but it has forgotten all this like a foolish individual, an idiot of the first water. It begins to identify itself with a little locality, a small house, a village, or even a thatched hut, and says: "This is my property." And it has no connection with anything else. Very pitiable existence indeed, says the Upanishad. What happens then?

People who have done good deeds are born in favourable circumstances. This is the law of *Karma.* The happiness, the freedom and the satisfaction that one experiences in life are due to some good deeds performed earlier, especially unselfish charitable deeds. The more you give, the more also will you receive. This is the law of action and reaction. You cannot get what you have not given. You cannot expect happiness here if you have not given happiness to others in an earlier life. If you are a greedy person, a miser, who has grabbed the happiness of others and enjoyed everything for your own self and put others to grief and sorrow,—that would be your fate also in this world. You would be a sufferer. You may be a poverty-stricken individual, and you may be a pauper having nothing, as the result of your selfish deeds in the previous lives. You have grabbed things from others, and therefore you are deprived of things in this life. But if you have been charitable, broad-minded, good-hearted and amiable, philanthropic, serviceful, that would be the same experience you will have in this life also. You would be given back the same thing that you have given to others. If you have given joy to others, joy will be given to you here. If you have given sorrow to others, sorrow will be given to you. So, the type of birth you take in this world, and the conditions of your existence here are all determined by what you did in your earlier existences. You may even be born as an animal, says the Upanishad, if the *Karma* is very bad. This is what happens to the individual when it takes birth in a particular world, or in this world. Thus is, therefore, the cycle or the rotation of the wheel of *Samsara,* the going up and coming down in the circle of transmigration. There is only one path moving along which there is no coming back. That is the *Devayana-Marga* mentioned above. The other path brings the soul back.

There is another kind of birth, says the Upanishad, which is not connected either with the Northern path or the Southern path. It is the birth of small creatures like insects, such as flies, gnats. They live for a few hours and pass away. In the rainy season you will see moths and small insects rising up from the damp earth and then dying the very day, sometimes even in a few hours. This is another kind of birth. Hard is life, indeed! Their life is so short, of such an insignificant duration that one may say that they are born and then dead. When you are seeing them being born, they are dead also at the same time. So short is the life of these creatures. This is the third way of being born and living, other than the life which we live through the Northern and the Southern paths. Why is this world not filled up with people, and why is this other world also not filled up by people even if many people die here? The answer is given here that there is a cycle or rotation of people. They go from this realm to that realm, from that realm to this realm, so that no world is completely filled to the brim or overflowing.

"One should get disgusted with this life", says the Upanishad. You must be having enough of this life. Who wants to live like this, in this manner, where you are subjected to the law over which you have no control and regarding which you have no say whatsoever, where you are always a sufferer, always in a state of liability and you do not know what will happen to you the next moment. Is this a life worth living? This is not life, but a form of unbelievably torturous mortality. O, what a life is of this world!

Ignorance breeds further troubles in the form of likes and dislikes, selfish actions and their consequences which bring about a birth of this kind, and eventually sorrow. In this connection it is said, in conclusion, that those who live a life of spiritual meditation are not affected by this law. This is a solacing conclusion that the Upanishad gives. You are affected by the law when you cannot understand the law. A person who knows what law is cannot be harmed by law. This is the case with any kind of law, whether it is governmental law or the law of electricity or the law of social life or the law of the spirit. It is ignorance of the way in which law works that binds us to the operation of the law. If we are thoroughly conversant with the intricacies of the working of the law, naturally we will abide by that law. And why should we be bound by it or harassed by it, or punished by it? We do not know how the law works. The whole difficulty is here. So, we cannot even abide by it. How can one abide by a law of which one has no knowledge? So, ignorance is the real trouble; every other trouble is subsidiary and an offshoot of it. 'One who knows this' truth of the universe, is free from every sin and trouble.

Now, here, the words, 'one who knows this', signify something that occurs again and again in the Upanishad. We should repeatedly mention here that 'one who knows this' does not mean one who has read the Upanishad, or one who has read it and understood what it says. No, not like that. Here, in the case of the Upanishad, knowledge means 'life' itself. It is 'living'; it is the extent to which this knowledge has become part of one's life. This is the knowledge that we are speaking of here in the Upanishad. *Knowledge is being;* this is the central philosophy of the Upanishad. This we cannot forget, when we study the Upanishad. *Knowledge is life; knowledge is*

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being; knowledge is existence; knowledge is what you are. So, what you *are* determines what you shall be in the future. And, if yours is a life of knowledge in the sense mentioned here, if you are an embodiment of this wisdom, if you are scintillating with the brilliance of this understanding, even here as a part of your own vital existence, if this knowledge is what you yourself are made of, if this knowledge is the very substance of your life, not merely an intellectual information, then you are free from the bondage of action. Then these laws of the world will not act upon you, because these laws are nothing but the expression of knowledge which is the nature of the ultimate Reality, finally. So, to the extent you are identified with the character of Reality, to that extent you are free from the law of *karma,* or action. *Karma* is the name we give to the way in which the law of Reality acts upon all particulars or individuals, reacts upon everyone and everything, when one is in a state of ignorance. To the extent of the percentage of the law of which you are ignorant, to that extent you are bound. And to the extent you are aware of it and live it, and are able to abide by it, to that extent you are also free.

So, one who knows these five Fires is free. It is difficult to know these Fires unless we live a life of meditation. Your whole life should be one of meditation. Perpetually, we must be seeing things in this light only. Our meditation should not mean merely a little act of half-an-hour's closing of the eyes and thinking something ethereal. It is a way of living throughout. When you see a thing, you see only in this way; when you speak, you speak from this point of view; when you think, this is at the background of your thought. So, you cease to be an ordinary human being when you live a life of this Upanishad. You are conditioned by this great knowledge, and it becomes, therefore, a liberator of your Soul. Even if you are in the midst of atmospheres which are otherwise not desirable, you shall be free from contamination, says the Upanishad, because no such things as the undesirable exist for such a person. The knower becomes co-extensive with the way in which Nature works in all its ways. And everything is Nature working in same way, the desirable as well as the undesirable, as we may call it. We become commensurate with the way in which Nature works in every way because of the meditation conducted in this manner. Thus, we cannot be harmed by any atmosphere, by anyone or by anything that is around us. On the other hand, perhaps, we may be able to influence positively the atmosphere in which we are living. "One who knows this", reaches the higher realms reached only by meritorious deeds; *"ya evem veda",* yea, "one who knows this."

This section, dealing with the *Panchagni-Vidya,* is partly a description of a lofty type of meditation, so that we may live in this world without being bound by the laws of the world, and after death go to higher regions for the liberation of the spirit, ultimately. Partly, also, it is a light thrown on the fact of the misery of life. There is a side of things apart from the fact that there is a comical aspect involved in every working of Nature. Life is sorrow; life is full of misery. It is full of grief and pain, because one is living in a state of ignorance. The Upanishad, on the one hand extols the greatness and the glory of knowledge which leads to the liberation of the soul, and on the other hand tells us how hard the laws will descend upon us and put us to the subjection of their mandate and requirements, and what sorrow will come upon us, what would be the unhappy state to which the soul would be subjected, if it is deprived of this knowledge and lives merely a life of utter ignorance.

VAISHVANARA, THE UNIVERSAL SELF

In the course of the study of the Panchagni-Vidya, we have been incidentally pointed out that there is great sorrow in life if it is attended with ignorance. Ignorance is the cause of suffering because it breeds erroneous action towards motives which are wrongly directed. This is the cause for the transmigratory cycle of the soul which can be put an end to only by proper meditation on the inward structure of the universe in its essential nature and not as it appears to the senses in ordinary life. The birth and death of an individual, the process of re-incarnation, the impulsion to action propelled by desires and the compulsion to restrain the consciousness within the four walls of one's own body—all these are aspects of the bondage of the individual. Life is an essence of bondage, a prison-house, as it were, because of a very complicated type of nescience, or ignorance, which has enmeshed the phenomenal existence of the Jiva, the individual. There must be some remedy for this state of affairs. Is there not a way of freedom? Are we to suffer only in this manner, subjected to the law of transmigration, conditioned by the law of cause and effect, and having to pass through the ordeal of this life in which no factors there seem to be over which we have either any control or of which we have any knowledge? With a view to expound a doctrine of freedom, or the liberation of the spirit from the bondage of Samsara, the Upanishad embarks upon a new subject subsequent to the exposition of the Panchagni-Vidya. The new section will be confined to the elucidation of the renowned meditation known as Vaishvanara-Vidya. In this context we are introduced to an anecdote, or a precedent story.

There were five wise people learned in sacred lore, all great meditators, performers of sacrifices, but who could not come to a conclusion in regard to the final destination of their meditations. These great men are named here. Prachinasala Aupamanyava, Satyayajna-Paulushi, Indradyumna Bhallaveya, Jana Sarkarakshya, Budila Asvatarasvi, these are the great men. They were all lofty meditators according to their own techniques, but they had doubts in their minds, because in the course of their meditations, in spite of the fact that they discovered a palpable result of a magnificent nature, there was something lurking in their minds, pointing to a defect in their meditations. And they could not know what was the defect. So, they conferred among themselves: "What is Atman? What is Brahman? What is the difficulty with us? Can you enlighten me?" Each one was questioning the others: "What is the proper course? Is there a possibility of bringing about a harmony among our meditations?" Each one was meditating in a particular manner, and each one was a great person with grand results following from the meditation. In spite of these happy consequences of their meditations, they had different techniques altogether, one not agreeing with the other. And they had a suspicion in their minds, "Why is it that there is no agreement among ourselves? There must be some peculiar point which escapes our notice. We all meditate on the Atman, the highest Reality of things, as the Self of beings, the Supreme Absolute which is Brahman. In spite of this endeavour of ours, there seems to be something irreconcilable among our methods of meditation." And then they conferred among themselves, but could not come to a conclusion.

Then they thought: "Well, in our locality is another great man. Why do we not go to him? Perhaps he knows this secret of the Vaishvanara Atman. He is Aruni Uddalaka, the great sage of Upanishad fame. Let us go to him." "Well," they said, "this is a good idea, we shall all go to this great man and put our questions to him if he can enlighten us and tell us what is the difficulty with us, what are the defects in our meditations, and what would be the proper procedure." So, they all went to him in a group, to raise a query on this subject.

But it was a surprise for Uddalaka to see all these great men coming in a mass to his cottage. They were not ordinary persons. So, he thought within himself, "Why are all these people coming? There must be some great point about it. Evidently they want to put some difficult question to me in regard to the highest Reality. Because they themselves are great men, and when they are all coming together to me, it definitely implies that they want to discuss with me the nature of the ultimate Reality, and I may not be able to answer their questions. Why should I risk my presence in the midst of these great men? So, when they come I shall direct them to somebody else, who, perhaps, will be in a position to answer all the questions." Thus he surmised within his mind that there must be some difficulty, and that he might not be able to swallow any poor show put before them if he attempted to answer their questions. So, even before they arrived, he had been thinking like this. "They will certainly put questions to me. They are great learned people and renowned for their large sacrifices. I cannot say that I know everything. There are many things which I myself cannot understand. So, why should I put myself in this predicament of answering questions which I may not be able to understand? I shall direct them to another."

The king of that country was a very great soul. He was known as Ashvapati. He was a highly spiritual adept, a great meditator on the Principle called the Vaishvanara. His kingdom was well-administered. He was an ideal ruler. He was very much revered like a parent in the whole kingdom. There was every virtue embodied in his personality. Uddalaka Aruni said: "O great men! I know why you have come. I am also in the same boat as you are. I have also doubts of my own. I do also meditate as you are all doing, and I have also some difficulties in spite of the fact I have been meditating for years together. Why not we all go together to the great emperor Ashvapati who is a master-meditator and a great adept in that supreme technique of meditation called Vaishvanara-Vidya?" They all, including Uddalaka, went to the king's palace and presented themselves before him.

When Brahmanas go to a king, naturally they go for some wealth. That is the usual tradition. The king thought that these people had come expecting some gift. He received them with great respect and honour, made them seated, and, lest they should not accept the gift that he offered to them, he said in his own humble way: "I follow the path of virtue. There is no defect in the administration of my country. I follow the path of simplicity and goodness. And here I am ready to offer you anything that you need by way of gift if you have come for that." He received each person separately with due honour. He garlanded them, gave them water to drink and enquired how they were, etc. He was good enough to give them a proper lodging in the palace.

The next morning, when he got up and went to his audience, these great men came there, and the first thing that the king spoke was: "There is no thief in my kingdom. There is no miser in my country, no one who is greedy, no one who drinks, no one who does not perform the daily oblations and libations prescribed as duty or sacrifice, no one uneducated or unlearned, and also no one unrestrained in behaviour. And, I am going to perform a sacrifice. I shall offer you as much gift by way of wealth as I shall be offering to the Ritviks, or the performers of the sacrifice. I hope you will be satisfied." All this the king was saying even before these people said anything, under the impression that they had come for wealth, gold, silver, etc. "So, you stay here in my palace for some time until I prepare myself for the performance of this sacrifice where I shall engage you also."

These great men said: "Well, you are so kind, but there is a different purpose with which we have come to you. We have not come for money; we have not come for wealth. Whatever be the purpose for which a person has come, that he must express. That is his duty. He should not speak something else, nor should he be eager to receive things quite different from that for which he has come. So, our purpose is something else, quite different from what you are speaking of or thinking in your mind." "What is that?" The king was surprised. "What is it that these people are asking," pondered the king.

"We have heard that you are in possession of a great knowledge, the knowledge of the Supreme Being about which we have great doubts and concerning which we have not come to any conclusion among ourselves. We have come as students begging for this knowledge that you possess, the wisdom-meditation on the Vaishvanara-Atman, which we do not know. This is the purpose for which we have come,—not for wealth, not for money, nor for gifts."

Naturally, the king was taken aback, that this should be the purpose for which they had come. Anyhow, he seems to have been a very generous-hearted person. He said: "You may come tomorrow morning and see me."

The seekers were very great people, perhaps elder in age to the king himself, not ordinary persons, but they humbled themselves before this mighty knowledge which the king possessed; and approached the king with offerings of *Samit* (sacred firewood) according to ancient tradition, the offering with which students used to approach the preceptor. They did not regard themselves as Brahmanas or Panditas superior to the Kshatriyas. They went as students of higher knowledge to the great master that the king was.

(To be continued)

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HOMAGE TO ADI SANKARACHARYA

(SRI HIMANSHU)

Most devout and worshipful prostrations to the great World Teacher, Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya, whose sacred Birth Anniversary occurs upon 1st May, 1998. As countless thousands of his devotees and followers of his sublime philosophy of *kewala-advaita* or absolute non-dualism observe this great occasion all over India in a befitting manner, let us also join them in observing this holy Anniversary.

I offer these ideas as an act of adoration on my part to this great divine *vibhuti* who is widely regarded as an "*Amsha-Avatara*" of the God of gods, Mahadev Shiva. In addition to the four great Jagadguru *peethas* at Joshimath in the North, Jagannath Puri in the East coast, Sringeri in the South and Dwaraka in the West coast and besides the fifth Kanchi Kamakoti *peetha* in the sacred city of Kanjeevaram presided over by the divine Mother Sri Kamakshi Devi, there are numerous Adi Sankaracharya Mathas established by devout people of the Hindu community throughout the length and breadth of India. Thus, everywhere throughout our country they would be celebrating this holy *Janma Jayanti* in a grand manner. Our Worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was a leading light in the holy *dasanami sannyasi parampara* which was founded more than twelve hundred years ago, by the worshipful Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya, also referred to with reverence by his countless followers by the term "Bhagavatpadacharya."

In what better way could I commence this homage of mine than by quoting our Worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj himself from his inspiring life-sketch of Sri Adi Sankaracharya in his unique book "The Lives of Saints."

"Sankara is the foremost among the master-minds and the giant souls which Mother India has produced. He was the expounder of the *advaita* philosophy. Sankara was a giant metaphysician, a practical philosopher, an infallible logician, a dynamic personality and a stupendous moral and spiritual force. His grasping and elucidating powers knew no bounds. He was a fully developed *yogi*, *jnani* and *bhakta*. He was a Karma *yogin* of no mean order. He was a powerful magnet.

"There is not one branch of knowledge which Sankara has left unexplored and which has not received the touch, polish and finish of his superhuman intellect. For Sankara and his works, we have a very high reverence. The loftiness, calmness and firmness of his mind, the impartiality with which he deals with various questions, his clearness of expression—all these make us revere the philosopher more and more. His teachings

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will continue to live as long as the sun shines.

"Sankara's scholarly erudition and his masterly way of exposition of intricate philosophical problems have won the admiration of all the philosophical schools of the world at the present moment. Sankara was an intellectual genius, a profound philosopher, an able propagandist, a matchless preacher, a gifted poet and a great religious reformer. Perhaps, never in the history of any literature, a stupendous writer like him has been found. Even the Western scholars of the present day pay their homage and respects to him. Of all the ancient systems, that of Sankaracharya will be found to be the most congenial and the most easy of acceptance to the modern mind.

"All are no doubt aware of the very important position assigned to Sankaracharya in the history of Indian philosophy. It can be affirmed, without any fear of contradiction, that Bharatavarsha would have ceased to be Bharatavarsha several centuries ago and would never have survived the murderous sword, the devastating fire and the religious intolerance of the successive invaders, if Sankara had not lived the life he lived and taught the lessons he taught."

There has been a recent revival in Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya's life and personality, his great philosophy of Kewala-Advaita-Vedanta and his admirable practical wisdom in consolidating and perpetuating his *siddhanta* by the establishment of the four Jagadguru Sankaracharya *peethas* as well as in his amazing and superhuman achievements within the brief span of 32 years before he gave up his body in the icy Himalayan regions somewhere beyond the holy Kedarnath Temple. This revival was brought about by the special celebrations of his twelfth Centenary upon a grand nationwide scale with numerous important programmes all over India. It was on his Twelve hundredth Birth Anniversary that an all-India committee comprising important leaders among learned *dashanami sannyasins* and prominent scholars of Rishikesh, Haridwar, Delhi etc. organised the Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya *dwadasha shatabdi mahotsava*. The inauguration of the celebrations took place in New Delhi in the presence of the then President of India, the esteemed Sri Giani Zail Singh, and other important dignitaries of the Union Government. Similar public functions of importance took place in many state capitals as well. Daily papers as also periodicals highlighted this event and many referred to the unique life and work of Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya as a significant factor for effective national integration. Even as the observance of the two thousand five hundredth Birth Anniversary of Lord Buddha and Lord Mahavira, a number of years ago, brought about a great revival of interest in these two worshipful prophets and attracted hundreds and thousands of devout Buddhists from countries like Thailand, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka to India on a devout pilgrimage to the sites of Kapilavastu and Lumbini as also Bodh Gaya, Rajagir, Nalanda, Saranath and other places associated with Lord Buddha, even so, during the Twelve hundredth Birth Anniversary of Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya (*dwadasha shatabdi*), people from all over India visited Kalady, in Kerala, and other places associated with Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya. Special editions of many of his works were reprinted. A movie film of Adi Sankaracharya entirely in *sanskrit* language was produced. It has been praised as a classical work. The all-India celebrations committee undertook a very unique project that aroused unprecedented enthusiasm in millions of people that year. They lighted a *jyoti* from Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya's temple at Kalady and, placing this carefully protected *jyoti* upon a transportation vehicle converted into a form of decorated chariot, they drove the *jyoti* Northward upon a well planned all-India route commencing from Kalady and terminating at the holy Kedarnath Temple. This *jyoti* chariot passed through all the important cities of India. In each town and city it was received with great eclat and taken through the main streets of the place. In bigger cities the chariot haited for the night and the learned *sannyasins* and scholars accompanying it addressed local audiences upon the life and teachings of Sankaracharya at public functions specially organised by the citizens for the occasion. Thus, the light of Sankaracharya's life and teachings brightened the hearts of vast audiences en route as the *jyoti* proceeded Northward.

Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya is truly a World Teacher without any doubt. Because, today at this time we find that his great *advaita* philosophy is gaining acceptance more and more in many foreign countries in different parts of the world. Towards the end of the last century Swami Vivekananda proclaimed the message of *advaita vedanta* to the whole world when representatives of many different countries had gathered together for the historical Parliament of World Religions that took place in Chicago in the year 1893. Since then this *vedantic* teaching has spread all over the world, thanks to the earnest and dedicated efforts of the monks of the Ramakrishna Mission through its branch centres in both hemispheres. As the material scientists of the modern world investigate, discover and declare the truths pertaining to the outside world of gross matter, the great Adi Sankaracharya shines as a rational and consummate scientist of the unseen realm of the inner spiritual world. The spiritual truth that Adi Sankaracharya declared to the whole of mankind is the divinity of man's essential, Real Nature. To enquire and to discriminate between the apparent visible human identity of man and his real invisible true inner identity is the way to arrive at the Truth. You all know the wonderful manner in which Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya summed up the entire range of philosophical knowledge in just half a verse by his famous utterance which says, "I shall declare in half a verse what has been said by millions of books: *brahman* alone is real. This world is only a temporary appearance. The individual soul is verily *brahman* only. It is no other than *brahman*." The miracle of this brief utterance carrying such a world of meaning has really a very few parallels. Having emphatically declared the Brahmanhood of the *jiva,* Adi Sankaracharya goes on to elaborate upon and describe in detail what this Brahmanhood implies through his wonderful poetical composition well known by the name *nirvana shatkam*. In this *vedantic* poem he follows the well-known process of the *neti-neti* method in which one rejects all the factors that constitute non-Self (*anatma*) and affirms the Self (*atma*).

Below is given the English language version of this sublime and soul-elevating composition of Adi Sankaracharya:

I am neither the mind nor intellect, nor egoism or the subconscious memory.
I am neither ear nor the tongue, or the sense of smell or sight.
I am neither space nor air, nor fire nor water or earth.
I am ever the all-auspicious Consciousness and Bliss.

I am neither the *prana* nor the five vital breaths, nor the seven elements of the body or its five sheaths.
I am neither hands nor feet, nor the tongue nor the other organs of action.
I am ever the all-auspicious Consciousness and Bliss.

I am neither greed nor delusion, nor loathing or liking.
I am neither pride nor ego of *dharma* or liberation.
I am neither desire of the mind nor the object of its desire.
I am ever the all-auspicious Consciousness and Bliss.

Neither I know of the pleasure and pain of virtue and vice nor of mantra or sacred place of *vedas* or sacrifice.
Neither I am the eater nor the food or the act of eating.
I am ever the all-auspicious Consciousness and Bliss.

No form or fancy do I have, all pervading everywhere I exist and yet I am beyond the senses.
Neither salvation I am nor anything to be known.
I am ever the all-auspicious Consciousness and Bliss.

In Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya we have a many sided genius. He was not just a towering philosopher and an *anubhava jnani* only. Though, without doubt, Adi Sankaracharya was a foremost propounder of pure *jnana,* yet, he had a heart filled with *para-bhakti*. He is the author of numerous soul-elevating *stotras* of great poetic beauty and *bhakti bhava*. In him we find a beautiful synthesis of the *nirakara nirguna* and *sakara saguna*. These compositions are perhaps more popular among the lay people in India than his difficult commentaries on the *Upanishads*, *Brahmasutras* and the *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*. He was not merely all *jnana* and no *bhakti;* on the contrary, Adi Sankaracharya was all *jnana* and all *bhakti*.

He was also a great upholder of *dharma* in the sense of ethical idealism and adherence to a moral code of conduct. Many valuable lessons in this field of man's life are to be found in his popular concise collection of verses known as the *Bhaja Govindam* compilation. The two sets of these compositions are known by the names of *charpatapanjarika* and *dwadashamanjarika* or *moha-mudgara*. To give you an idea of their simplicity, beauty and practical value I am presenting herewith just a few verses:

Day and night, evening and morning, winter and spring
ever recurringly come and go.
While thus Time sports playfully human life ebbs away;
Yet, foolish man vainly clings on to his desires and wishes.

In childhood absorbed in playing (is man).
In youth the heart is filled with yearning for charming
young damsels.
Overcome by old age, man is gripped in sorrow and
vain regrets.
Alas, No one ever gives heart and mind to the contemplation
of the Transcendental Brahman, which is the only enduring
and Eternal Reality.

O foolish man! Give up this senseless craving for the
accumulation of wealth.
Let right wisdom prevail in your mind and craving renounce.
Be content and rejoice with whatever is obtained through right
deeds performed now as well as in previous lives.

Reflect always that riches bring problems.
There is not the least happiness--this is the truth.
A wealthy man has fear even from his own son.
This is well known all over the world.

Read a little of the *Bhagavad Gita* daily.
Drink a little of the sacred Ganges water.
Worship the Lord Almighty.
Then you will have no fear of death.

Have devotion to Guru's lotus-feet.
From enslavement to this passing world free yourself without delay.
Control your senses and mind.
Then you will see God dwelling within your heart.

We are able to perceive the versatile nature of this great World Teacher. To philosophers he is a towering philosophical personality. To devotional people he is a *bhakta* par excellence, whose outpourings in the form of hymns of supplications and adorations are unparalleled in their spirit of deep devotion and love for the Divine. To the common man he is a guide, friend and philosopher teaching him in simple words how to avoid the pitfalls of life and attain the great goal of human existence. Though more than twelve centuries have passed by, yet, even today, Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya is a living presence and a spiritual force that helps us to rise upwards from passing unrealities to the Eternal Reality and from darkness of *ajnana* to everlasting Light. Thus, do I conclude my homage to Bhagavatpadacharya Sri Adi Sankaracharyaji.

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BE BRAVE

Do not murmur. Do not grumble when troubles and sorrows descend upon you. Every difficulty is an opportunity for you to develop your will and grow strong. Welcome it. Difficulties strengthen your will, augment your power of endurance and turn your mind towards God. Face them with a smile. In your real strength thou art invincible. Nothing can harm you. Conquer the difficulties, one by one. This is the beginning of a new life, a life of expansion, glory and divine splendour. Aspire and pray. Grow. Tread the spiritual path and realise: I AM THE IMMORTAL SELF.

—Swami Sivananda

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

This notice is specially published here to convey an important fact regarding myself and my work to all the regular readers of this Divine Life journal, to all members of the Divine Life Society as well as to the public in general whosoever might happen to read this periodical.

I wish to make it quite clear once for all that no one has been authorised to work on my behalf or in my name. If at the time of notice there may be some such letter given by me authorising any person to carry out some work then that letter stands cancelled. It will no longer hold good. If I want any specific thing done then I will request personally or write a personal letter to the concerned individual to do that specific thing on my behalf. This present notice supercedes all previous authorisations or permissions given to anyone instructing him/her to work on my behalf. Such previous instructions, if any will be no longer valid in the light of this notice. Therefore, no action should be taken on the basis of any previous letter that might have been obtained from me.

This may be regarded as my final pronouncement on this subject.

Any individual wishing to make any particular inquiry in this connection may communicate with me care of Swami Pranavaswarupananda, Guru Niwas, Muni-Ki-Reti, P.O. Shivanandanagar-249 192, Distt. Tehri Garhwal, U.P., and mark the envelope "personal". Thank you.

Swami Chidananda

President, The Divine Life Society

A very special announcement

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE YOGA VEDANTA FOREST ACADEMY

The Divine Life Society's Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy established in 1948 by Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj completes full 50 years of its educational activity on the 3rd of July. Readers and D.L.S. members may kindly refer to my monthly letter in the previous issue (i.e. April '98) issue particularly from its paragraph 3 of column 1 and the entire two paragraphs of column 2 on its page 23. In this portion indicated, my suggestions and ideas have been stated. The registrar Sri Ved Prakash Grover Saheb and others directly involved in the Academy work have been requested to do all the needful work. In connection with this forthcoming event in case any ex-student of the Academy's past courses wishes to offer one's voluntary help, they may write to Sri V.P. Grover offering their seva. He will consider such offer in a positive and constructive approach. The Golden Jubilee programme will be of a week's duration if not longer. God willing, I may give personal attention to this work sometime in early June. In everyway may it be a fully satisfactory and successful celebration. Helpful suggestions are welcome.

Swami Chidananda

President, The Divine Life Society

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THE DIVINE LIFE

6/98

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सनत्सुजातीयम्

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच—

न चेद्वेदा वेदविदं त्रातुं शक्ता विचक्षण ।
अथ कस्मात् प्रलापोऽयं ब्राह्मणानां सनातनः ॥

Na chedveda vedavidam tratum shakta vichakshana,
Atha kasmat pralapoyam brahmananam sanatanah.

Dhritarashtra said :

O wise one! If the Vedas are unable to save from transmigration one who is well-versed in them, then why this ancient prattle of the Brahmanas (that Vedas should be studied and their injunctions should be followed).

—*Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, ii-6*

GURU

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

The Guru is God Himself manifesting in a personal form to guide the aspirant. Grace of God takes the form of the Guru. To see the Guru is to see God. The Guru is united with God. He inspires devotion in others. His presence purifies all.

The Guru is verily a link between the individual and the Immortal. He is a being who has raised himself from *this* into *That*, and thus has free and unhampered access into both the realms. He stands, as it were, upon the threshold of immortality; and, bending down he raises the struggling individuals with his one hand, and with the other lifts them up into the *imperium* of everlasting joy and infinite Truth-Consciousness.

THE SADGURU

To be a Guru, one must have a command from God.

Mere study of books cannot make one a Guru. One who has studied the Vedas, and who has direct knowledge of the Atman through Anubhava, can alone be enrolled as a Guru. A Jivanmukta or liberated sage is the real Guru or spiritual preceptor. He is the Sadguru. He is identical with Brahman or the Supreme Self. He is a Knower of Brahman.

A Sadguru is endowed with countless Siddhis. He possesses all divine Aiswarya, all the wealth of the Lord.

Possession of Siddhis, however, is not the test to declare the greatness of a sage or to prove that he has attained Self-realisation. Sadgurus generally do not exhibit any miracle or Siddhi. Sometimes, however, they may do so in order to convince the aspirants of the existence of superphysical things, give them encouragement, and instil faith in their hearts.

The Sadguru is Brahman Himself. He is an ocean of bliss, knowledge, and mercy. He is the captain of your soul. He is the fountain of joy. He removes all your troubles, sorrows, and obstacles. He shows you the right divine path. He tears your veil of ignorance. He makes you immortal and divine. He transmutes your lower, diabolical nature. He gives you the rope of knowledge, and takes you up when you are drowning in this ocean of Samsara. Do not consider him to be only a man. If you take him as a man, you are a beast. Worship your Guru and bow to him with reverence.

Guru is God. A word from him is a word from God. He need not teach anything. Even his presence or company is elevating, inspiring, and stirring. His very company is self-illumination. Living in his company is spiritual education. Read the Granth-Saheb. You will come to know the greatness of the Guru.

Man can learn only from man, and

hence God teaches through a human body. In your Guru, you have your human ideal of perfection. He is the pattern into which you wish to mould yourself. Your mind will readily be convinced that such a great soul is fit to be worshipped and revered.

Guru is the Moksha-dvara. He is the gateway to the transcendental Truth-Consciousness. But, it is the aspirant that has to enter through it. The Guru is a help, but the actual task of practical Sadhana falls on the aspirant himself.

THE NEED FOR A GURU

For a beginner in the spiritual path, a Guru is necessary. To light a candle, you need a burning candle. Even so, an illumined soul alone can enlighten another soul.

Some do meditation for some years independently. Later on, they actually feel the necessity of a Guru. They come across some obstacles in the way. They are unable to know how to obviate these impediments or stumbling blocks. Then they begin to search for a Master.

Only the man who has already been to Badrinath will be able to tell you the road. In the case of the spiritual path, it is still more difficult to find your way. The mind will mislead you very often. The Guru will be able to remove pitfalls and obstacles, and lead you along the right path. He will tell you: "This road leads you to Moksha; this one leads to bondage." Without this guidance, you might want to go to Badrinath, but find yourself in Delhi!

The scriptures are like a forest. There are ambiguous passages. There are passages which are apparently contradictory. There are passages which have esoteric meanings, diverse significance, and hidden explanations. There are cross-references. You are in need of a Guru or Preceptor who will explain to you the right meaning, who will remove doubts and ambiguities, who will place before you the essence of the teachings.

A Guru is absolutely necessary for every aspirant in the spiritual path. It is only the Guru who will find out your defects. The nature of egoism is such that you will not be able to find out your own defects. Just as a man cannot see his back, so also he cannot see his own errors. He must live under a Guru for the eradication of his evil qualities and defects.

The aspirant who is under the guidance of a Master or Guru is safe from being led astray. Satsanga or association with the Guru is an armour and fortress to guard you against all temptations and unfavourable forces of the material world.

Cases of those who had attained perfection without study under any Guru should not be cited as authority against the necessity of a Guru; for, such great men are the anomalies of spiritual life, and not the common normality. They come into existence as spiritual masters as a result of the intense service, study, and meditation practised in previous births. They had already studied under the Guru. The present birth is only its continuative spiritual effect. Hence, the importance of the Guru is not lessened thereby.

Some teachers mislead their aspirants.

They say unto all: "Think for yourself. Do not surrender yourself to any Guru." When one says, "Do not follow any Guru!", he intends to be the listeners' Guru himself. Do not approach such pseudo-Gurus. Do not hear their lectures.

All great ones had their teachers. All the sages, saints, prophets, world-teachers, incarnations, great men, have had their own Gurus, however great they might have been. Svetaketu learnt the nature of Truth from Uddalaka, Maitreyi from Yajnavalkya, Bhrigu from Varuna, Narada from Sanatkumara, Nachiketas from Yama, Indra from Prajapati; and several others humbly went to wise ones, observed strict Brahmacharya, practised rigorous discipline, and learnt Brahma-vidya from them.

Lord Krishna sat at the feet of His Guru Sandeepani. Lord Rama had Guru Vasishtha who gave Him Upadesha. Lord Jesus sought John to be baptised by him on the banks of the river Jordan. Even Devas have Brihaspati as their Guru. Even the greatest among the divine beings sat at the feet of Guru Dakshinamurti.

A neophyte must have a personal Guru first. He cannot have God as Guru to begin with. He must have a pure mind. He must have ethical perfection. He must be intensely virtuous. He must be above body-consciousness. Then alone can he have God as Guru.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR GURU

If you find peace in the presence of a Mahatma, if you are inspired by his speeches, if he is able to clear your doubts, if he is free from greed, anger, and lust, if he is selfless, loving, and I-less, you can take him as your Guru. He who is able to clear your doubts, he who is sympathetic in your Sadhana, he who does not disturb your beliefs but helps you on from where you are, he in whose very presence you feel spiritually elevated—he is your Guru. Once you choose your Guru, implicitly follow him. God will guide you through the Guru.

Do not use your reason too much in the selection of your Guru. You will fail if you do so. If you fail to get a first-class Guru, try to follow the instructions of the Sadhu who is treading the path for some years, who has purity and other virtuous qualities, and who has some knowledge of the scriptures. Just as a student of the Intermediate class will be able to teach a student of Third form when a professor with M.A. qualification is not available, just as a sub-assistant surgeon will be able to attend on a patient when the civil surgeon is not available, this second-class type of Guru will be able to help you.

If you are not able to find out even this second-class type of Guru, you can follow the teachings contained in the books written by realised saints like Sri Sankara, Dattatreya, and others. You can keep a photo of such a realised Guru, if available, and worship the same with faith and devotion. Gradually you will get inspiration, and the Guru may appear in a dream and initiate and inspire you at the proper time. For a sincere Sadhaka, help comes in a mysterious manner. When the time is ripe, the Guru and the disciple are brought together by the Lord in a mysterious way.

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MYSTERIOUS HELP FROM THE LORD

Just see how the Lord has helped the devotees in the following instances. Eknath heard an Akasavani, a voice from the sky. It said, "See Janardan Pant at Deva Giri. He will put you in the proper path and guide you." Eknath acted accordingly and found his Guru. Tukaram received his Mantra, *Rama Krishna Hari,* in his dream. He repeated this Mantra and had Darshan of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna directed Namdev to get his higher initiation from a Sannyasin at Mallikarjuna. Queen Chudala assumed the form of Kumbha Muni, appeared before her husband Sikhidhwaja in the forest, and initiated him in the mysteries of Kaivalya. Madhura Kavi saw a light in the firmament for three days consecutively. It guided him and took him to his Guru Nammalvar who was sitting in Samadhi underneath a tamarind tree near Tinnevelly. Bilvamangal was very much attracted to Chintamani, the dancing woman. The latter became his Guru. Tulasidas received instructions from an invisible being to see Hanuman and, through Hanuman, to get Darshan of Sri Rama.

Competent disciples are never in want of a competent Guru. Realised souls are not rare. Ordinary ignorant-minded persons cannot easily recognise them. Only a few persons, who are pure and embodiments of all virtuous qualities, can understand realised souls, and they only will be benefited in their company.

So long as there is a world, there are Gurus and Vedas to guide the struggling souls in the path of Self-realisation. The number of realised souls may be less in the Iron Age when compared with the Satya Yuga, but they are always present to help the aspirants. Let each man take the path according to his capacity, temperament, and understanding. His Sadguru will meet him along that path.

SIKSHA GURUS AND DIKSHA GURU

Man has a twofold duty here on earth—to preserve his life, and to realise his Self. To preserve his life, he has to learn to work for his daily bread. To realise his Self, he has to serve, love, and meditate. The Guru who teaches him the knowledge of worldly arts is the Siksha Guru. The Guru who shows him the path of Realisation is the Diksha Guru. Siksha Gurus can be many—as many as the things he wishes to learn. The Diksha Guru can be only one—the one who leads him to Moksha.

STICK TO ONE GURU

Do not dig here and there shallow pits for getting water. The pits will dry up soon. Dig a very deep pit in one place. Centralise all your efforts here. You will get good water that can supply you throughout the year. Even so, try to imbibe thoroughly the spiritual teachings from one preceptor alone. Drink deep from one man. Sit at his feet for some years. There is no use of wandering from one man to another man, out of curiosity, losing faith in a short time. Do not have the ever-changing mind of a prostitute. Follow the spiritual instructions of one man only. If you go to several people and follow the instructions of many persons, you will be bewildered. You will be in a dilemma.

From a doctor, you get a prescription. From two doctors, you get consultation. From three doctors, you get your own cremation. Even so, if you have many Gurus, you will be bewildered. You will be at a loss to know what to do. One Guru will tell you: "Do Soham Japa." Another will tell you: "Do Japa of Sri Ram." A third Guru will tell you: "Hear Anahat sounds." You will be puzzled. Stick to one Guru and follow his instructions.

Listen to all, but follow one. Respect all, but adore one. Gather knowledge from all, but adopt the teachings of one Master. Then you will have rapid spiritual progress.

GURU-PARAMPARA

Spiritual knowledge is a matter of Guru-parampara. It is handed down from Guru to disciple. Gaudapadacharya imparted Self-knowledge to his disciple Govindacharya; Govindacharya to his disciple Sankaracharya; Sankaracharya to his disciple Suresvaracharya. Matsyendranath imparted knowledge to his disciple Gorakhnath; Gorakhnath to Nivrittinath; Nivrittinath to Jnanadeva. Totapuri imparted knowledge to Sri Ramakrishna, and Ramakrishna to Swami Vivekananda. It was Ashtavakra who moulded the life of Raja Janaka. It was Gorakhnath who shaped the spiritual destiny of Raja Bhartrihari. It was Lord Krishna who made Arjuna and Uddhava get themselves established in the spiritual path when their minds were in an unsettled state.

INITIATION—ITS MEANING

A Bhakta will be initiated by a Bhakta saint in the path of devotion. A Jnani will i itiate a student of Vedanta in th Mahavakyas. A Hatha Yogi or a Raja Yo can initiate another in his particular pa But, a sage of perfect realisation, a Purn jnani or Purna-yogi, can give initiation any particular path. A sage or saint like S Sankara or Madhusudana Sarasvati can i itiate a Sadhaka in any particular path f which the aspirant is fit. The Guru will fi out by close study of the aspirant his taste temperaments, and capacity, and decide f him the most suitable path. If his heart is i pure, the teacher will prescribe selfless se vice for a number of years. Then the Gu will find out for what particular path the st dent is fit and initiate him in that.

Initiation does not mean reciting Mantra into another's ears. If Rama is i fluenced by the thoughts of Krishna, t former has got initiation already from t latter. If an aspirant treads the path of tru after studying the books written by a sai and imbibes his teachings, that saint has ready become his Guru.

SAKTI-SANCHAR

Just as you can give an orange to man, so also, spiritual power can be tran mitted by one to another. This method transmitting spiritual powers is termed Sak sanchar. In Sakti-sanchar, a certain spiritu vibration of the Sadguru is actually tran ferred to the mind of the disciple.

Spiritual power is transmitted by t Guru to the proper disciple whom he co siders fit for Sakti-sanchar. The Guru c transform the disciple by a look, a touch, a thought or a word, or mere willing.

Sakti-sanchar comes through Parampara. It is a hidden mystic science. It is handed down from Guru to disciple.

Lord Jesus, through touch, transmitted his spiritual power to some of his disciples. A disciple of Samartha Ramdas transmitted his power to that dancing girl's daughter who was very passionate towards him. The disciple gazed at her and gave her Samadhi. Her passion vanished. She became very religious and spiritual. Lord Krishna touched the blind eyes of Surdas. The inner eye of Surdas was opened. He had Bhava Samadhi. Lord Gouranga, through his touch, produced divine intoxication in many people and converted them to his side. Atheists even danced in ecstasy in the streets by his touch and sang songs of Hari.

The disciple should not rest satisfied with the transmission of power from the Guru. He will have to struggle hard in Sadhana for further perfection and attainments. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa touched Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda had superconscious experience. He struggled hard for seven years more, even after the touch, for attaining perfection.

GRACE AND SELF-EFFORT

Realisation cannot come to you as a miracle done by your Guru. Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus, Rama Tirtha have all done Sadhana. Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to develop Vairagya and Abhyasa. He did not say to him, "I will give you Mukti now." Therefore, abandon the wrong notion that your Guru will give you Samadhi and Mukti. Strive, purify, meditate, and realise.

Guru-kripa—grace of a Guru—is very necessary. That does not mean that the disciple should sit idle. He must do rigorous Purushartha, spiritual practices. The whole work must be done by the student. Nowadays, people want a drop of water from the Kamandalu of a Sannyasin and desire to enter into Samadhi immediately. They are not prepared to undergo any Sadhana for purification and Self-realisation. They want a magic pill to push them into Samadhi. If you have got such delusion, give it up immediately.

The Guru and the Shastras can show you the path and remove your doubts. Anubhava of the Aparoksha kind or direct intuitive knowledge is left for your own experience. A hungry man will have to eat for himself. He who has a severe itching will have to scratch for himself.

No doubt, the Guru's blessing can do everything. But how can one have his blessings? By pleasing the Guru. A Guru can be pleased with his disciple only if the latter carries out his spiritual instructions implicitly. Carefully follow, therefore, the instructions of the Guru. Act up to his instructions. Then only will you deserve his blessings, and then alone his blessings can do everything.

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THE YOGIC IDEAL OF LIFE

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

Reduce your wants to the barest minimum.

Adapt yourself to circumstances.

Never be inordinately attached to anything or anybody.

Share what you have with others.

Be ever ready to serve. Lose no opportunity.

Serve with Atma Bhava (feeling that you are serving but your own self).

Speak measured and kind words.

Have a burning thirst for God realisation.

Renounce all your cravings and desires, and surrender yourself unto God.

Spiritual path is like the razor's edge. A competent Guru is absolutely necessary.

Have great patience and perseverance.

Never leave the Abhyasa (spiritual practice) even for a day.

God and Guru will guide you. You yourself will have to tread the path.

Life is short. Time of death is uncertain. Apply yourself seriously to Yogic Sadhana.

Maintain daily spiritual diary and record correctly your progress and failures. Stick to resolves.

Do not complain that there is no time for Sadhana (spiritual endeavour).

Reduce sleep and talk. Stick to meditation in Brahmamuhurta (from 4 a.m. to a.m.). Stick to prayer.

ASPIRE FERVENTLY

Let the thoughts of God and His law keep away the thoughts of the world.

Forget the feeling that you are so and so, a male or a female, by vigorous Brahmachintana (thinking of the Absolute).

Never postpone a thing for tomorrow, if it is possible for you to do it today.

Do not boast or make a show of your abilities. Be simple and humble.

Be cheerful always. Give up worries.

Be indifferent to things that do not concern you.

Fly away from bad company and vain discussion.

Be alone for a few hours daily.

Give up greediness, jealousy and hoarding.

Control your emotions by Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (dispassion).

Maintain equilibrium of mind always.

Think twice before you speak and thrice before you act. Give up backbiting, criticising and fault-finding. Beware of reaction.

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PRACTISE DILIGENTLY

Find out your own faults and weaknesses. See only good in others.

Forgive and forget the harm done by others. Do good to others who hate you.

Shun lust, anger, egoism, infatuation and greed.

Expect nothing from others. Have a set of maxims always with you to induce Vairagya (dispassion).

Treat sensual enjoyment as poison. They cannot give you real satisfaction.

Preserve your vital energy carefully.

Revere woman as Mother Divine. Root out the sex-idea.

See God in every face, in everything.

PRAY DEVOTEDLY

Take to Sankirtana (devotional singing), Satsanga (good company), Japa and prayer, when the mind is overpowered by lower instincts.

Face obstacles coolly and boldly.

Do not mind opposition when you are on the path of Truth. Yield not to flattery.

Respect all living creatures, even the unworthy. Serve them. God dwells in all.

Take care of your health. Do not neglect daily round of simple Asanas and Pranayamas.

Be active and humble always.

Cultivate your heart by giving. Be generous, charitable. Give more than the receiver's expectation.

Desires multiply misery. Develop contentment. Control the senses one by one.

MEDITATE REGULARLY

Cultivate the Brahmakara-vritti (thought of the Absolute) by regular meditation.

Have a check over your thoughts. Keep them pure and sublime.

Do not lose temper when anybody insults, taunts or rebukes you. It is a mere sound of words.

Rest your mind in God and live for the practice of Truth.

Be up and doing in the path of divine life.

Have definite aims in your life and persevere diligently.

Observe silence daily for two hours.

Be moderate in everything. Extremes are always dangerous.

Everyday have self-analysis and introspection. Know the extent of your growth.

Conserve your energy and concentrate on your spiritual ideals. Think little of mundane objects, and think more of God. You must realise God in this very birth itself.

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Cultivate a melting heart, the giving-hand, the kindly speech, the life of service, equal vision and impartial attitude. Your life will indeed be blessed.

—**Swami Sivananda**

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VAISHVANARA VIDYA

(SRI SWAMI KRISHNANANDA)

[Continued from the Previous Issue]

Now, the king made a special exception to the rule in the case of these great people. Generally, knowledge is not imparted like that, so suddenly. It is not that someone comes today and receives initiation tomorrow. There is a great tradition of discipline. Sometimes it is imposed upon the students for years together. But, here, an exception to the rule was made by the king in the light of the fact that these students were not ordinary men. They were well prepared already; they were Brahmanas, great meditators, religious people, and entirely devoted to spiritual life. They were not ordinary, raw Brahmacharins approaching a *Guru* for knowledge. So, the king did not impose this discipline of staying with the *Guru* for a long time, serving him, etc. He simply accepted them as students at once, merely on their declaring themselves as students: "We have come as students." "Well, I accept you as students." Without any kind of formality of discipline, and the like, he spoke to them directly.

THE HEAVEN AS THE HEAD OF THE UNIVERSAL SELF

The king questioned them one by one, "What is it that you are meditating upon already? Why is it that you are in difficulty?" Now, each one was asked this question. The first question to be put was to the first among them. "Aupamanyava, which Atman are you meditating upon? You are certainly meditating on the Atman. It is a great surprise. How is it that everyone is meditating on the Atman and, yet, one differs from the other in the technique? What is the sort of Atman, or the kind of Atman that you are thinking of in your mind?" "I meditate on the Heaven as the Supreme Being, Your Highness. That is the symbol I take for fixing my attention of consciousness. I consider the highest region of the Heaven as the final symbol for my meditation. I regard it as the Absolute. I do not think anything else in my mind. I exclusively devote my attention to it, because I regard it as the All. Therefore, I consider it as the Atman. So, this is how I meditate. But I have no peace of mind. There is something wrong with this technique, and for that purpose I have come to you."

The king replied: "You are a very honest student of meditation, no doubt, and you have been reverentially pursuing this technique of meditation. The Heaven is, of course, a part of the great Vaishvanara, the Universal Being, which you are meditating upon. Inasmuch as what you are meditating upon is part of the Supreme Reality, great benefits are being showered upon you as a result of this meditation. You have abun-

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dance of wealth in your house. You perform large sacrifices without end, and you have no difficulty in receiving guests and feeding them, etc. You press the *Soma* juice in your house daily, which means to say, you perform *Yajṇa,* sacrifice every day. This is the result of your meditation. You have plenty of food in your house; there is no lack of it. You see everything delightful everywhere. You are a happy person. Whoever else also meditates like this, as you are doing, will receive the same benefits. He will be well-renowned, he will have plenty of every kind, he will be a very happy and amiable person and he will be friendly with all people. There will be nothing lacking in his house. He will be spiritually resplendent. This is what will happen to any person who meditates like this, as you are doing, on the Vaishvanara-Atman. And this is your case also. But, there is a great mistake in your meditation. This is only a part of the whole Reality. This is the head, as it were, of Reality, the topmost region of the Vaishvanara, the crown, the head of the Universal Being, as it were, and it is this on which you are meditating. Inasmuch as you have mistaken a part for the whole, you have considered the head for the whole body; because you have made this mistake in your meditation, your head would have fallen, one day or the other, some great calamity would have befallen you if you had not come to me now, at the proper time, for rectification." It is like a good doctor saying, "It is a good thing that you have come to me. This is a very advanced case." Likewise, the king said, "It is a good thing you came to me at the proper time; otherwise some catastrophe would have come upon you due to this error in your meditation. You have mistaken the head for the whole Body. Well, let it be. Now, be quiet."

THE SUN AS THE EYE OF THE UNIVERSAL SELF

Now, the king puts another question to the other sage: "Satyayajna Paulushi, what is the Atman that you are meditating upon?" "I meditate on the Sun, Your Highness, the most brilliant object conceivable. It is the Supreme Being for me. I regard the Sun, Surya, as the symbol of the Absolute. That is the Atman on which I am meditating." The king said: "Satyayajna, you meditate on the Sun, as the Supreme Atman. Well, this is a part of the Vaishvanara's Body. Because it is a part of this Great Being, and you meditate upon it as if it is the all, you have in your own life certain characteristics of the Sun. There is brilliance in your outlook; there is plenty in your family; and there is a sort of completeness in your life, as the Sun himself is a complete being in himself. There is material glory in your house, and your mind is satisfied. You have a very happy mind; and you have many other things in your family,—gold, silver, servants, rich food, and such other things. All this is the result of your meditation on the repository of the immensity of wealth which is the Sun himself. And, whoever meditates as you are meditating, also, will enjoy the same fruits of immensity and magnificence in his life. He will have plenty of food to eat, and plenty of everything. He will be resplendent with the knowledge accruing from this meditation which is *Brahmavarchas;* yes, whoever meditates thus. But the mistake that you are making in your meditation is that the Sun is the Eye, as it were, of the Cosmic Body of Vaishvanara. It is not the whole of Reality. If you had not come to me, you would have become blind due to this error in your meditation, mistaking the Eye of the Virat for the whole of Virat."

AIR AS THE BREATH OF THE UNIVERSAL SELF

Now, the king asks the third person the same question: "Indradyumna Bhallaveya, what is it that you are meditating upon? What is your Atman, regarding which you have difficulties?" "I meditate upon the Cosmic Air that blows as the all-pervading Reality, Your Highness." The king said: "Well, so far, so good. As this, the Supreme Being, Vaishvanara, is all-pervading, so is this Air also all-pervading. You have taken this all-pervading Air which moves everywhere as the symbol of Reality. Very good. Due to this meditation on the widespread Air, Vayu, which is moving everywhere, in every direction, coming from every side, as the Ultimate Being, tributes and offerings come to you from every side. Respect and honour come to you unasked. Your glory is moving everywhere, as the Air is moving everywhere. Plenty of vehicles you have, lines of chariots follow you. And you are also plentiful in every respect, in food, wealth, etc. So is the glory of everyone who meditates like this." He repeats the glories of such meditation in the same way as he mentioned the glories of the other meditations to the other persons. "This is a wonderful meditation, but there is a defect in this meditation. Air is only the Vital Breath, as it were, of the Vaishvanara Atman. You have mistaken it for the whole. You would have had great trouble if you had not come to me. Your vital air would have left you if you had not come to me as you have rightly done."

SPACE AS THE BODY OF THE UNIVERSAL SELF

Jana Sarkarakshya, the other great man was questioned: "What is the Atman you are meditating upon?" "I meditate on the all-pervading Space, Your Highness." This is also a symbol for meditation. Space is all-pervading. When one cannot think of anything that is all-pervading, what else can one think except Space? Space is a good symbol for meditation, indeed. The king said: "Space is extensive in every respect. You meditate upon it as the ultimate Reality, and so you have extensiveness of everything as a consequence of this meditation. You have plenty of everything in your house, wealth and dear ones. You are glory-incarnate at home and in your community. Everything blessed is with you due to this meditation on extensiveness. So is the glory of anyone who thus meditates. But, this is not the correct meditation; there is an error in this meditation also, because the Space that you are thinking of as the Cosmic Reality, is really the Body, as it were, and not the whole, of Vaishvanara. If you had not come to me, what would have happened to you? Some catastrophe, like paralysis of the trunk, or something of that kind, would have befallen you. Your meditation would have failed you completely." All these meditations are wonderful things, but they are also dangerous things. This follows from what the king is telling to these great men.

WATER AS THE LOWER BELLY OF THE UNIVERSAL SELF

Budila Asvatarasvi, the other hero, was questioned: "What is it that you are meditating upon?" "I meditate on Water, Your Highness." There are people who meditate on the Ocean as a symbol of Brahman, just as there are people who contemplate Space as such a symbol. "I contemplate Water as symbolic of Reality (the Ocean perhaps), as an endless expanse. This is my Atman." The king said: "This meditation is good so far as it goes, on account of which you are endowed with plenty of every kind. Water is the source of food-stuff and wealth and strength. It is the cause of the abundance of foodstuff especially, in your house. And so is the case with anyone who thus meditates. But, this is also a defective form of meditation because it is the lower belly, as it were, of the Cosmic Vaishvanara. It is just the watery element of the whole cosmic embodiment. It is one of the constituents of the Universal Body; it is not the entire structure in its totality. If you had not come to me, You would have had a physical illne.ss of this part of the body which is abundant with water. Your body would have failed or some such thing would have taken place, and you would have perished as a consequence of this defective meditation."

THE EARTH AS THE FEET OF THE UNIVERSAL SELF

Then the king puts the question to Uddalaka Aruni himself: "What is it that you are meditating upon?" Uddalaka said: "I meditate upon the Earth in its comprehensiveness as Reality, Your Highness." The king said: "This is all right, and so you have great virtue following from this meditation. You enjoy and see what is dear. As the Earth is the foundation of all things, you are well-founded in life. And so shall be anyone who meditates as you do. But, the Earth is only the foot-stool of the Vaishvanara Atman, as it were. The Earth is like the feet of the Universal Self. It is the feet of the Atman because it is the lowest degree among the manifestations of Reality. If you had not come to me, something untoward would have happened to your feet. They would have withered away. Then you would have gone on crutches."

THE SELF AS THE UNIVERSAL WHOLE

This is what the king said in answer to the representations made by all the six great men. "My dear friends," spoke the king: "All of you are very sincere in your meditations, and honest, indeed. Because of your honesty and sincerity and tenacity in meditation, you enjoy plenty of everything in your house and in your families and within yourselves. But you do not know that you have committed errors in your meditations. Ultimately, some trouble would have come to you, as a consequence. It is good that you all came to me. In the beginning, everything looks all right even in an erroneous meditation, but afterwards some difficulty arises, which cannot be rectified even by the best of medicines." "So, what is it that we have to do now? We have understood where we stand." "Well, you have all made two mistakes, to put the whole thing precisely. You have considered some parts of the whole as the whole. You have mistaken the finite for the Infinite. Nothing that you are thinking in your minds can be the whole, because the mind is accustomed to think only finite objects. Whatever be your concept of expanse in regard to the particular object on which you are meditating, it is still finite. This is one error. The other mistake that you are making is that you think of the Atman as an object, as if it is outside. You say, it is Space, it is Water, it is the Sun, it is the Earth, and so on. Well, it is all very beautiful. But, it is "outside you"! How can a non-Atman be the Atman?

"And what do you mean by the Atman? How can the Atman be outside you? Your own Self is external to you? What a concept! You have really committed a blunder in conceiving your own Self as a non-Self. The Self cannot be outside itself; it cannot be an object of itself; it cannot think itself; meditate upon itself as another; it cannot be other than itself. The first point, then, is that a finite thing cannot be regarded as the Infinite. The other thing is that an external thing cannot be regarded as the Self. You have committed both these mistakes. You are having the knowledge of this Great Being little by little, part by part, as in the story o the blind men and the elephant. Each blin man was touching a part of the elephant body and regarding it as something specifi The man never knew for a moment that h was touching a part of the elephant. Likewise, you are not aware of the fact that wha you think as the Absolute is, in fact, relativ What you think as the All is only a par Therefore, you are well-to-do people, indeed, on account of the meditations, bu there is also the defect that I have pointe out. One can have glory in this world, hav renown, have plenty, and look all righ in the eyes of people, even if there is fundamental defect spiritually. And that cannot be known by mere observation fro outside.

"There is no need to pour water and p manure on every leaf of the tree if you wa to tend a tree. You have to water the roo that is sufficient. If you want to take care a huge tree, what do you do? Do you go the top of the tree and count every leaf an sprinkle manure over it, one by one, wat every leaf, every flower, every fruit? N You concern yourself with the root of th tree, and then you see there is an efflorecence of every part of the tree, automaticall Whatever you have obtained through the discrete forms of meditation, you can obta at one stroke by a total meditation, which the meditation on the Vaishvanara Atma The root of the Reality is missed by yo consciousness. Whoever can conceive in h mind the true Vaishvanara as that which e ends from the earth to the heavens, from the heavens to the earth, from the topmost level of manifestation down to the lowest level, missing no link whatsoever, visualises the Whole. If you can see through your mind this extensiveness of manifestation from the highest to the lowest, at once, without missing any part, which means to say, if you can be comprehensive in a universal way in your envisagement of the form of Reality, and if you can be the Atman, the Self at the same time, then what is it that you lack? This is the Vaishvanara Atman, the All-Self. Whoever can meditate in this manner becomes the Self of every being all at once. One becomes the Self of all the worlds; he becomes the Self of anything that can be anywhere, and he becomes the possessor of the glory of anything that exists anywhere, in any realm, in any form, under any circumstance. This is the secret I let out to you if you can contemplate in this manner. This is a Herculean feat, because the mind cannot think like this. If you slip from the grasp of your mind when you think like this, you will find that the mind falls back upon its old groove of thinking in terms of particulars and externalisation of objects. Who can contemplate the object as non-externalised? Not any human being. But this is what you are supposed to do. All these parts which you have mentioned are various limbs of the Cosmic Body. You have to bring them together and conceive the Whole, at once, in your consciousness. Do not say, "This is the Sun, this is space, this is water," and all that. Do not think like this. Let all these be thought together, immediately, in their comprehensiveness without missing anyone whatsoever, by feeling oneness with Earth, Water, Sun, Air, Space, the Heaven, and everything."

Now, having described the cosmic aspect of the Vaishvanara Atman as the Supreme Object of meditation, the Upanishad introduces us to an immediate consequence that follows from such meditation. The meditator cannot stand outside this Great Object of meditation. This is very clear. Because of the comprehensiveness of the Object, the Universality of the Vaishvanara Atman, the meditator has already undergone a transmutation of personality, entered into the bosom of Reality. And, whatever one does, then, becomes an action of the Vaishvanara Atman. This is a very serious consequence that follows from an intense meditation in this manner. Whatever I think becomes the Thought of the Vaishvanara Atman. Whatever I speak becomes an expression of the Vaishvanara Atman; and whatever I do becomes Its Action. And, then, my actions become a Cosmic Sacrifice, just as the gods thought Creation as a Universal Sacrifice, as we have it in the Purusha-Sukta. One cannot make a distinction between God's Thought and a human being's thought when one meditates in this way. What God thinks and man thinks will, then, be identical. Thus, the daily activity proceeding from the personality of an individual, in the case of a meditator in the manner mentioned, would be a Cosmic Sacrifice. This is called Prana-Agnihotra, the sacred oblation at the Universal Altar of the Fire of the Absolute.

The fact of the organic connection of

the individual with the Vaishvanara implies that there are cosmical aspects operating even in the individual, just as everything that is in the Ocean is also in the wave, notwithstanding the difference between the crest called the wave and the body which is the ocean. The essential harmony between the individual and the Universal becomes patent when a spiritual investigation is conducted into the essence of the structure of both the individual and the cosmic. So, the meditation by the individual on the cosmic, or the Vaishvanara, means the establishment of an inner co-ordination and the effectuation of the qualitative non-difference between the meditating principle and the object that is meditated upon. If every function that is going on in the individual is ultimately inseparable from the nature and operation of the Universal, meditation is just the awareness of this fact. There is nothing more to be done in meditation than to raise the consciousness to the fact of this inseparability between cosmic functions and individual functions. Such simple acts as eating, drinking, breathing and working become universally significant. They are not private deeds or individual affairs, as they are taken to be. The Upanishad, here, takes us above the ordinary concept of human action and the nature of the individual and abolishes the absurd notion that we entertain usually, namely, that there are such things as individuals, ultimately. The meditation that is prescribed here is of various kinds. One of the specific methods mentioned is that there should be an invocation of universal significance, even during the performance of individual actions.

The specific action that is taken up for discussion here is, what is called in the language of the sacred lore, *Prana-Agnihotra*, or the sacrificial offering to the Universal Fire. The food that we take every day is a holy oblation to the All-pervading Vital Fire. This meditation is *Prana-Agnihotra*. *Agnihotra* is the consecrated offering into the sacred Fire. Ritualistically or exoterically conceived, this means the daily performance of the *Yajna,* or sacrifice, by a householder. The Upanishad makes out that this *Agnihotra is* perpetually taking place in our own bodies, of which we have to be conscious in our meditation. The external sacrifice ceases to be external any more. Viewing everything from the point of view of the All-inclusive Vaishvanara, the externality of an action ceases for ever. *There is no such thing as external action, because everything that we regard as external is internal to the Vaishvanara.* Hence, even the outward sacrifice, the speech that we utter and the work that we do, etc. outwardly, in the world, cease to be a personal or social affair. They become a spiritual worship, a divine contemplation, The three fires which the householders exoterically worship in their houses are called *Garhapatya, Anvaharyapachana* and *Ahavaniya.* These three sacrifices are internally constituted in the individual, in the act of this meditation. The Upanishad tells us that we have to perform a contemplative sacrifice constructing the external ritual as an activity that is going on within ourselves. These fires are within the body of the Virat, the Vaishvanara Himself. And, inasmuch as we are inseparable from Vaishvanara, these fires are inside our own Self. So, when we offer food into the mouth, it is not an animal act that we are performing for the satisfaction of the bodily organism, but an ultimate impulse that is arising from the Universal Reality. Hunger is not merely a function of the stomach. It is not the alimentary canal functioning in the body merely. It is something wider than what we are, indicating that we are related to something vaster than what we seem to be from our points of view. In religious language, in scriptural parlance, Vaishvanara is the word used to describe the Ultimate Reality, and also for the fire that digests food. The internal fire that is responsible for the conversion of food into chyle etc., that which is responsible for the absorption of the elements of diet into our system, this inward heat is Vaishvanara. It is not the physical body alone that is working in digestion, because the physical body is visible even in a corpse but there is no such heat there. What has happened to the heat? That heat is not the heat of the physical fire; it is not the heat of any conglomeration of chemical elements in the body. The Upanishad identifies this heat, which is the living force in us, with the Ultimate Reality, called here Vaishvanara, Or the Universal Fire, which consumes everything. The five Pranas are the eternal agents of the performance of any action. They are the ambassadors, as it were, of the Ultimate Being. The food that we eat is digested by the action of the Pranas. We have five Pranas, and so, when taking food, religious people utter *Mantras* saying, 'this is to the *Prana*, this is to the *Apana*,' etc. This is not merely a ritual unconsciously performed as a routine, but a religious worship. It is a meditation, and we are supposed to be conscious of what we are doing when we consume food. The process of *Prana-Agnihotra* mentioned here, is the act of introducing a universal significance into what are apparently individual functions.

The three fires are inside the Universal Being, Vaishvanara. And, again, to repeat, this threefold fire is in us as inseparable from the Vaishvanara. So, when we take a morsel of food, what are we to contemplate?

(To be continued)

* * *

Constantly recite Lord's Name. Observe Brahmacharya. Develop forgiveness, patience, and cosmic love. Serve all. Feel that all are manifestation of the Lord. Be vigilant. Think of the evil results of anger and the benefits of peace. You can control anger. Nip the anger in its bud. Nip irritability at first.

—Swami Sivananda

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THE NATURE OF THE HIGHER LAWS OF DHARMA AND KARMA

(SRI S. SUBRAMANYA IYER)

There are two aspects of Dharma, the fundamental or the unmanifested and the applied or the manifested. In its former unmanifested, transcendental aspect it is Para-tattva or Para Brahman. In the latter, it is the all-pervading spiritual principle of Rita that maintains order, harmony, and rhythm in the cosmos.

Further in its evolutionary social aspect, it is the moral law of Dharma that upholds the universe as cosmic integrator, unifier and harmoniser. In its applied or operational aspect, it is the law of Karma that holds the scales of the universe and maintains cosmic justice at all levels of existence.

The whole creation is bound by Dharma and Karma. None can ever escape their inexorable impact. It is believed that gods are the guardians of Dharma, the different functionaries in the cosmic hierarchy according to the Sattva-Guna-Svabhava; they are ever intent in increasing the spiritual content of the Universe.

Dharma in its applied aspect is the moral code for the conduct of right living. It is the principle of righteousness. It is the art of living in tune with the science of life. It comprises what is true, what is right, what is good and what is just. It is the eternal law of life, and hence it is Sanatana Dharma. It fulfils the purpose of Sanatana Dharma. It fulfils the purpose of spiritual evolution through the instrumentality of law of Karma. It is the cosmic legislator and executor. Its fundamental principles hold good for all times; only its apparent forms need necessary adaptation to the changing conditions from time to time, in tune with the time spirit—Yuga Dharma.

Dharma was not invented by anyone, it was; rather, discovered by our sages in Yogic Prajna—a direct perception of the cosmic operation in its integral comprehension of physical, moral and spiritual dimensions of the universe. It is a direct spiritual vision from the faculty centre. Man has higher faculties in latent form which can be made to manifest by necessary Yogic discipline. Science of Yoga is based on Supra-sensory data and its understanding penetrates into the nature of operation in the subtler planes of existence. Our sages, applying these higher laws to human social lives, formulated Dharma Shastras for righteous living.

There exists confusion in human understanding with regard to the relation between science and religion. They are not two different things diametrically opposed to each other. They are two aspects of the same reality, two sides of the same coin. The cur-

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rent discoveries regarding the phenomenal nature of the universe prove that their revelations are not conflicting with the thoughts and ideas of rational religion. The universe is evolving on firm scientific foundations. As it could be difficult for the common people to grasp the scientific play of the abstract principles, our sages evolved popular religions and explained the higher truths in figures and symbols. There is esoteric meaning and scientific significance behind their figures and symbols, which are alluded to in different principles and forces in the cosmos. Evidently different religious paths were laid down to suit different temperaments and different grades and levels of understanding.

Scientific knowledge and understanding are based on sensory data and with the aid of its physical instruments and therefore do not extend beyond the physical nature of the universe. The science of Yoga. with its supra-sensory perception forms the basis of true rational religion and its understanding is comprehensive, synthetic, covering all the planes of existence. The apparent differences that seem to exist between science and religion, are born of the ignorance of the nature of their inter-relations.

It is incumbent on man to understand the Karmic law, the cosmic executor Dharma and to make out the scientific nature of its operation in all the stages of motive, thought and action; and this understanding transforms man's attitude to life.

Every effect can be traced to its original cause. Man reaps as he sows. He can never escape the inexorable impact of Karma, the inherent law of life. Man is free to violate Dharma and is free to suffer. He shall submit to blow after blow on the anvil of life until he realises and tunes to Dharma. For this creative exercise, for the right understanding, life is the field. Nothing ever happens in vain in the economy of the cosmic purpose. There is the rich reward of experience even in suffering. More often than not failure is a blessing in disguise. The law of Karma is always kind and merciful and acts dual in life, positively and negatively and corrects man through a series of experiences.

Each and every wrong thought and motive sows a psychological seed in the subconscious, forms an impression, nurtures, grows, matures and reacts with full force at the appropriate time. Unlike the physical laws here the effect is not immediate and obvious. No straight course or limit of time can be set for its cause-effect sequence. Generally many causes in association produce an accumulated effect somewhere, sometime. The nature of its operation is highly subtle and difficult to grasp, but all the same it works with cause-effect precision by way of action and reaction. The Jivatman is the eternal witness to all our motivations. In intense Sadhana with sincere Bhava, through confession, repentance and prayer, we can cleanse the dark impressions of the subconscious by giving vent to them through spiritual vibrations. In this way one can lessen the physical bundle and lighten the Karmic load.

Man is the microcosm in the macrocosm of the universal life and is related in a similar way as a cell in the human body. The universe is a series of life within life. From the atom to the universe life, law and purpose are the same and are mutually interwoven. Man is constituted in the same pattern as the cosmos and inherits all the potentialities of the cosmos, its principles, powers and faculties. Man is potential godhead. Hence the importance of self-knowledge that scriptures enjoin 'know thyself' knowing which everything is known!

The moral sense is inherent in man as the 'voice of conscience'. Man can intuitively discern the rightness of any social problem, but the voice of ego eclipses the silent voice of the heart. Man is often motivated by egotistic impulses and his reason stands ready to rationalise and justify his stand. Man in his enlightened moods of impersonal is the embodiment of Dharma and responds to the best of cultures.

Knowing the nature of fire no one thrusts his hands into the fire and burn. We respond sanely and intuitively to many of the physical laws. This knowledge has become part of our spontaneous understanding. Similarly, if we could discern the nature of the higher laws of Dharma and Karma and if its convictions could permeate our general understanding, much of human suffering could be avoided. Let us live in tune with Dharma.

* * *

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A Leaf from the Epics and Puranas :

INDRA ROBBED PRAHLADA

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

In days of yore, Daitya Prahlada snatched from the great Indra his sovereignty by the merit of his spotless conduct, character and virtues. He brought the three worlds under subjection. Indra approached Brihaspati and said, "My adorable Lord! Please tell me the source of happiness." Brihaspati replied, "Knowledge is the source of greatest happiness." But that was not what Indra wanted. What he wanted was to get back from Prahlada the mastery of the three worlds. He asked Brihaspati as to whether there was anything superior to that. Brihaspati replied, "There is something, O son, which is still higher. The great Bhargava (Sukracharya, the preceptor of the Asuras) will instruct you better. Go to him and enquire of him, O king of the celestials."

Indra went to Bhargava and put the same question to him. Sukracharya also spoke about knowledge of the Supreme Soul or Brahman. It did not satisfy Indra. What he wanted was mere material power and possessions. He asked Sukracharya whether there was anything superior to what the sage had already told him. Sukracharya said, "Yes, there is. Go and ask Prahlada, the Asura King."

Indra assumed the form of a Brahmana student, went to Prahlada and put him the same question that he put to Brihaspati and Sukracharya. Prahlada replied, "I have no time. I am wholly engaged in the task of ruling the three worlds. I cannot, therefore, instruct you." The Brahmana said, "O king, when you have leisure, I wish to listen to your instruction about that conduct which yields good. I can wait." He stayed patiently at Prahlada's palace and behaved like a dutiful disciple. He began to do with his whole heart whatever Prahlada wished.

Many a time the Brahmana enquired, "O chastiser of enemies! By what means have you been able to acquire the sovereignty of the three worlds? Tell me, O pious king, what those means are."

Prahlada replied, "O twice-born one, I do not feel any pride in my being a king. I do not treat Brahmanas with contempt. I am ever obedient to the teachings of Sukracharya. I listen to the instructions of the Brahmanas and follow them strictly. They speak to me with confidence, because I have controlled my anger. I wait upon and serve the Brahmanas and my elders. I bear no malice. They restrain me from unrighteous or improper courses. I am self-controlled. All my senses are under restraint. The twice-born ones give me wholesome advice. I taste the ambrosia dropped by those learned men. The wisdom that flows from the mouths of the sages gives immortality. It is this

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wisdom that conduces to a man's supreme well-being."

The boy listened to Prahlada with great devotion and Bhava.

Prahlada was very much pleased with his disciple. He said to him, "Please ask me for a boon. I shall grant it."

The Brahmana replied, "Please give me, O king, your *Sila* (character)." Prahlada was surprised and pained at the request of his disciple. But, anyhow, he stuck to his promise and gave his *Sila*.

Prahlada was in a perplexed state. An effulgent form full of power issued from his body and was leaving it. Prahlada asked that form "Who are you?" It said, "I am your *Sila*. I am the embodiment of your conduct. You have abandoned me. I am going to dwell in the Brahmana student to whom you have given me away." Having said these words, the form entered the body of the Brahmana and vanished from sight.

After the disappearance of that form, another brilliant form similar to it issued from the body of Prahlada. Prahlada asked that form: "Who are you?" It said, "I am your *Dharma*. I am an embodiment of righteousness. I reside where *Sila* lives. I have to follow *Sila* to the place it goes."

A third form issued from the body of Prahlada. He asked the form who it was. The form replied, "I am *Satya* (truthfulness). I am a follower of *Dharma*. I will go where *Dharma* goes." It left the body of Prahlada and entered the body of the Brahmana student. Next came another form. It was *Vritta* (conduct). It said, "I will go where *Satya* goes." Then issued still another form accompanied by a great sound. It said, "I am *Bala* (power). I stay where *Vritta* stays."

Then a glorious Devi issued from his body. She said, "I am *Sri* (prosperity). I must go to that place where power goes."

Prahlada asked the Devi: "O Goddess of prosperity! Who is that Brahmana?" Sri replied, "He is no Brahmana at all. The Brahmana is Indra. He has cleverly robbed you of the mastery of the three worlds. When you abandoned your *Sila*, you gave the rest of us also, because all of us, Dharma, Vritta, Bala and I, have our roots in *Sila*."

Righteousness, truth, good works, power and prosperity all originate from conduct. *Sila* is the root of other virtues, of power and prosperity.

Therefore, develop *Sila*.

* * *

> *Through the practice of concentration and meditation you attain clarity of mind, increased grasping power, retentive memory, increased intelligence, confidence, optimism, peace of mind and control of mind and senses.*
>
> **—Swami Sivananda**

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PROGRAMME OF GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS OF THE YOGA-VEDANTA FOREST ACADEMY

(A DEPARTMENT OF THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY H.Q.)

From 26-6-1998 to 3-7-1998

26th June, 1998 (Friday)

5-00 a.m. to 6-00 a.m.	Brahmamuhurta Session—Prayer, Guru Stotra, Pratah Smaran, Shanti Path, Meditation and Pravachana.
5-30 a.m. to 6-30 a.m.	Yajna in Yajnashala.
9-15 a.m. to 11-00 a.m.	Forenoon Session—Pada Puja, Jaya Ganesha Prayer, Blessings by Swamijis, Inauguration of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations and Saraswati Puja.
7-30 p.m. to 9-30 p.m.	Night Satsanga.

3—day Spiritual Seminar from 27-6-1998 to 29-6-1998

5-00 a.m. to 6-00 a.m.	Brahmamuhurta Session—Prayer, Guru Stotra, Pratah Smaran, Shanti Path, Meditation and Pravachana.
9-00 a.m. to 11-00 a.m.	Forenoon Session—Jaya Ganesha Prayer, Students speak about their experiences at Y.V.F.A., Devotees speak about their experiences with Gurudev and Pravachanas of Swamijis.
7-30 p.m. to 9-30 p.m.	Night Satsanga.

3—day Spiritual Conference from 30-6-1998 to 2-7-1998

5-00 a.m. to 6-00 a.m.	Brahmamuhurta Session—Prayer, Guru Stotra, Pratah Smaran, Shanti Path, Meditation and Pravachana.
9-00 a.m. to 11-00 a.m.	Forenoon Session—Jaya Ganesha Prayer, Pravachanas by Mahamandaleshwars and Lectures by University Professors.
7-30 p.m. to 9-30 p.m.	Night Satsanga.

Golden Jubilee Day Final Function and Valedictory Function of the 29th Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course on 3rd July, 1998 (Friday)

5-00 a.m. to 6-30 a.m.	Brahmamuhurta Session—Prayer, Guru Stotra, Pratah Smaran, Shanti Path, Meditation, Pravachana and Prabhat Pheri.
9-00 a.m. to 11-00 a.m.	Jaya Ganesha Prayer, Blessings by Swamijis, Awarding Certificates and Jnana Prasad to the students of 29th Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course, Honouring of Professors and Saraswati Puja.

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सनत्सुजातीयम्

तदर्थमुक्तं तप एतदिज्या ताभ्यामसौ पुण्यमुपैति विद्वान् ।
पुण्येन पापं विनिहत्य पश्चात् स जायते ज्ञानविदीपितात्मा ॥

Tadarthamuktam tapa etadijya tabhyamasau punyamupaiti vidvan,
Punyena papam vinihatya paschat sa jayate jnanavideepitatma.

Yajnas (austerities such as Krcchra and Candrayana) and rituals (such as Jyotistoma) have been prescribed by the Vedas for realising that Brahman. By the performance of these acts of merit the wise one gains *punya* which destroys sins and then (after *punya* has been spent in destroying sins) gets final illumination.

—*Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, ii-8*

DISCIPLE

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

A disciple is he who follows the instructions of the Guru to the letter and spirit, and who propagates the teachings of the Guru to less evolved souls in the path till the end of his life.

A true disciple is concerned only with the divine nature of the Guru. The Guru's action as man is not the disciple's concern. He is totally oblivious of it. To him, the Guru is Guru even if he acts unconventionally. Always remember that the nature of a saint is unfathomable. Judge him not. Measure not his divine nature with the inadequate yardstick of your ignorance. Criticise not your Guru's action which is done on universal vision.

True discipleship opens the vision. It kindles the spiritual fire. It awakens the dormant faculties. It is most necessary in one's journey along the spiritual path. Guru and disciple become one. The Guru blesses, guides and inspires the disciple. He transmits his spiritual power to him. He transforms and spiritualises him.

WHO IS QUALIFIED TO APPROACH THE GURU?

To approach a Guru, you must be a proper Adhikari. Correct understanding, non-attachment to worldly objects, serenity of mind, restraint of the senses, absence of base passions, faith in the Guru, and devotion to God are the necessary equipments with which the aspirant has to approach the Guru.

The Guru will impart spiritual instructions only to that aspirant who thirsts for liberation, who duly obeys the injunctions of the Shastras, who has subdued his passions and senses, who has a calm mind, and who possesses virtuous qualities like mercy, cosmic love, patience, humility, endurance, forbearance, etc. Initiation into the mysteries of Brahman will fructify only when the disciple's mind becomes desireless, and will produce Jnana in it.

GURU-SEVA

Aspirants should direct their whole attention in the beginning towards the removal of selfishness by protracted service to the Guru. Serve your Guru with divine Bhava. The cancer of individuality will be dissolved.

The captain of a ship is ever alert. A fisherman is ever alert. A surgeon in the operation theatre is ever alert. Even so, a thirsting hungry disciple should be ever alert in the service of his Guru.

Live to serve the Guru. You must watch for opportunities. Do not wait for invitation. Volunteer yourself for the Guru's service.

Serve your Guru humbly, willingly, unquestioningly, unassumingly, ungrudgingly, untiringly, and lovingly. The more your energy you spend in serving your Guru, the more the divine energy will flow into you.

He who serves the Guru serves the whole world. Serve the Guru without selfish ends. Scrutinise your inner motives while doing service to the Guru. Service must be done to the Guru without expectation of name, fame, power, wealth, etc.

OBEDIENCE TO THE GURU

Obedience to the Guru is better than reverence. Obedience is precious virtue, because if you try to develop the virtue of obedience, the ego, the arch-enemy on the path of Self-realisation, slowly gets rooted out.

Only the disciple who obeys his Guru can have command over his lower self. Obedience should be very practical, wholehearted, and actively persevering. True obedience to Guru neither procrastinates nor questions. A hypocritical disciple obeys his Guru from fear. The true disciple obeys his Guru with pure love, for love's sake.

Learn how to obey. Then alone you can command. Learn how to be a disciple. Then alone you can become a Guru.

Give up the delusive notion that to submit to the preceptor, to obey him, and to carry out his instructions is slavish mentality. The ignorant man thinks that it is beneath his dignity and against his freedom to submit to another man's command. This is a grave blunder. If you reflect carefully, you will see that your individual freedom is, in reality, an absolutely abject slavery to your own ego and vanity. It is the vagaries of the sensual mind. He who attains victory over the mind and the ego is the truly free man. He is the hero. It is to attain this victory that man submits to the higher spiritualised personality of the Guru. By this submission, he vanquishes his lower ego and realises the bliss of infinite consciousness.

HAPPY-GO-LUCKY DISCIPLES

The spiritual path is not like writing a thesis for the Master of Arts degree. It is quite a different line altogether. The help of a teacher is necessary at every moment. Young aspirants become self-sufficient, arrogant and self-assertive in these days. They do not care to carry out the orders of a Guru. They do not wish to have a Guru. They want independence from the very beginning. They think they are in the Turiya Avastha when they do not know even the A-B-C of spirituality or truth. They mistake licentiousness of "having their own ways and sweet will" for freedom. This is a serious, lamentable mistake. This is the reason why they do not grow. They lose their faith in the efficacy of Sadhana and in the existence of God. They wander about in a happy-go-lucky manner, without any aim, from Kashmir to Gangotri, and from Gangotri to Rameswaram, talking some nonsense on the way, something from Vichara Sagara, something from Panchadasi, and posing as Jivanmuktas.

SURRENDER AND GRACE

If you want to drink water at the tap, you will have to bend yourself. Even so, if you want to drink the spiritual nectar of immortality which flows from the holy lips of the Guru, you will have to be an embodiment of humility and meekness.

The lower nature of the mind must be thoroughly regenerated. The aspirant says to his preceptor: "I want to practise Yoga. I want to enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi. I want to sit at your feet. I have surrendered myself to you." But he does not want to change his lower nature and habits, old character, behaviour, and conduct.

One's individual ego, preconceived notions, pet ideas and prejudices, and selfish interests should be given up. All these stand in the way of carrying out the teachings and instructions of one's Guru.

Lay bare to your Guru the secrets of your heart. The more you do so, the greater the Guru's sympathy, which means an accession of strength to you in the struggle against sin and temptation.

The aspirant, before he desires the grace of the Master, should deserve it. The supply of divine grace comes only when there is a real thirst in the aspirant, and when he is fit to receive it.

The Guru's grace descends upon those who feel utterly humble and faithful to him. Faith is confidence and trust in the Guru. Faith is firm conviction of the truth of what is declared by the preceptor by way either of testimony or authority, without any other evidence or proof. The disciple who has faith in the Guru argues not, thinks not, reasons not, and cogitates not. He simply obeys, obeys, and obeys.

The disciple's self-surrender to the Guru and the Guru's grace are interrelated. Surrender draws down the Guru's grace, and the grace of the Guru makes the surrender complete.

The Guru's grace works in the form of Sadhana in the aspirant. If an aspirant sticks to the path tenaciously, this is the grace of the Guru. If he resists when temptation assails him, this is the grace of the Guru. If people receive him with love and reverence, this is the grace of the Guru. If he gets all bodily wants, this is the grace of the Guru. If he gets encouragement and strength when he is in despair and despondency, this is the grace of the Guru. If he gets over the body-consciousness and rests in his own Ananda Svarupa, this is the grace of the Guru. Feel his grace at every step, and be sincere and truthful to him.

HOW THE GURU TEACHES

The Guru teaches through personal example. The day-to-day conduct of the Guru is a living ideal to the disciple who is observant. The life of the Guru is a living sermon to the sincere disciple. By constant contact, the disciple imbibes the virtues of his Guru. He is moulded gradually. Study the Chhandogya Upanishad. You will find that Indra stayed with Prajapati for a period of a hundred and one years and served him whole-heartedly.

The Guru alone knows the spiritual needs of his disciples. He will give Upadesa according to the disciple's temperament and evolution. This Upadesa should be kept a secret. Discussion among disciples will lead to criticism of the Guru and slackness in Sadhana. There will be no spiritual progress.

Follow the Guru's Upadesa to the very letter. Remember it is meant for you only. The other disciples have received Guru-upadesa, too. Let them follow it. Do not impose the Upadesa you have received on others.

The student can imbibe or draw from his teacher in proportion to his degree of faith. When the Guru comes to the aspirant to give spiritual instructions, if the aspirant does not pay any attention, if he is self-sufficient and heedless, if he bolts the door of his heart, he is not benefited.

HOW THE GURU TESTS

The Sadguru communicates the secret knowledge of the Upanishads to his trusted disciples only after repeated entreaty and severe testing. Sometimes, the Guru may even tempt his disciple, but the later should overcome the temptation by firm faith in the Guru.

In days of yore, the tests were very severe. Once Gorakhnath asked some of his students to climb up a small tree and throw themselves, head downwards, on a very sharp trident or Trisula. Many faithless students kept quiet. But one faithful student at once climbed up the tree with lightning speed and hurled himself downwards. He was protected by the invisible hand of Gorakhnath. He had immediate Self-realisation.

Once Guru Govind Singh tested his students. He said, "My dear disciples! If you have real devotion towards me, let six of you come forward and give me their heads. Then we can have success in our attempt." Two faithful disciples offered their heads. Guru Govind Singh took them inside the camp and cut off the heads of two goats instead.

The Guru tests the students in various ways. Some students misunderstand him and lose their faith in him. Hence they are not benefited.

FOUR CLASSES OF DISCIPLES

The best disciple is like petrol or aviation spirit. Even from a great distance, he will instantly react to the spark of the Guru's Upadesa.

The second class disciple is like camphor. A touch awakens his inner spirit and kindles the fire of spirituality in him.

The third class of disciple is like coal. The Guru has to take great pains in order to awaken the spirit in him.

The fourth class of disciple is like a plantain stem. No efforts will be of any avail over him. Whatever the Guru may do, he remains cold and inert.

Two things are necessary for a beautifully finished idol or image. One is a perfect, faultless, good piece of marble; the second is the expert sculptor. The piece of marble should but unconditionally remain in the hands of the sculptor in order to be carved and chiselled into the fine image. So too, the disciple has but to cleanse himself, purify himself, and make himself a perfectly faultless piece of marble, and placing himself under the expert guidance of his Master, allow to be carved out and chiselled into the image of God.

* * *

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OM

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Adorations to Om. Salutations to Om. Prostrations to Om. Devotion to Om.

Glory to Om. Victory to Om. Hosanna to Om. Hail to Om.

Om is sacred monosyllable. Om is the mystic letter. Om is the immortal Akshara. In Om, the world rests. In Om, we live and move. In Om, we go to rest. In Om, we find our quest.

Om is the symbol of Brahman. Om is the word of power. Om is the life of all lives. Om is the soul of all souls.

Om is verily Brahman. Om is the Satchidananda. Om is infinity. Om is eternity. Om is immortality.

Om is the source of everything. Om is the womb of all Vedas. Om is the basis for all languages. In Om merge all trinities. From Om proceed all sounds. In Om exist all objects.

Om is the highest Mantra. Om is Soham. Om is *Om Tat Sat.* Om is a lamp unto thy feet and a light unto thy path.

Sound—The First Manifestation of the Absolute

Om is Nada Brahman. Nada is sound. Sound is vibration. Om is the first vibration of sound. Sound is the first manifestation of the Absolute.

We know not anything about the nature of the absolute except that It is. With all their kindness, the scriptures have tried to tell us all about creation, how it proceeded from the Absolute. They say: "Brahman was one and non-dual. It thought, '*Ekoham Bahu Syam*'. That caused a vibration, eventually bringing in sound, and that sound was Om, whence are all other manifestations."

Thus, sound is virtually the comprehensible basis for all creation. Brahman is incomprehensible in Its transcendent aspect. The nearest approach to It is only sound, or we can call sound as Apara Brahman.

Om—The Basis of All Sounds

All the objects are denoted by sounds, and all sounds merge in Omkara. All the collection of speech or words terminate in one sound 'Om'.

The humming of the bees, the sweet melody of the nightingale, the seven tunes in music, the sound of the Mridanga and ketledrum, the lute and the flute, the roaring of the lion, the singing of the lover, the neighing of the horses, the hissing of the cobra, the 'hu, hu' sound of the invalids, the crying of the baby, the clapping of the audience when an orator delivers his peroration—all are emanations from Omkara only.

The sound produced in the flowing Ganga, the sound that is heard at a distance and that which proceeds from the bustle of a market, the sound that is produced when the flywheel of an engine is set in motion, the sound that is caused when it rains—it is all 'Om' only. You split any word: you find 'Om' there. Om is all-pervading like Akasa, like Brahman.

Om is the basis of all sounds. Om consists of three letters, A, U, and M. A, U, M cover the whole range of sound-vibrations.

The larynx and the palate are the sounding-boards. When you pronounce A, no part of the tongue or palate is touched. When you pronounce U, the sound rolls from the very root to the end of the sounding-board of the mouth. M is the last sound which is produced by closing the two lips. Therefore, all sounds are centred in Om. All languages originate from Om.

The essence of the four Vedas is Om only. He who chants or repeats Om really repeats the sacred books of the whole world. Om is source or womb for all religions and scriptures. *Om, Amen,* and *Ahamin* are all one. They represent the truth or Brahman, the One Existence. There is no worship without Om.

Om Represents All Trinities

Om is everything. Om is your real name. Om covers all the threefold experiences of man. Om stands for all the phenomenal worlds. From Om this sense-universe has been projected. The world exists in Om and dissolves in Om. A represents the physical plane; U represents the mental plane and astral planes, the world of spirits, all heavens; M represents the deep sleep state and all that is unknown even in your wakeful state and all that is beyond the reach of the intellect. Om represents all. Om is the basis of your life, thought and intelligence.

Every kind of trinity is represented by Om, such as, Brahma-Vishnu-Siva, past-present-future, birth-life-death, creation-preservation-destruction, waking-dreaming-deep sleep, being—non-being—becoming, and so on.

All triplets are represented by Om, such as Sarasvati-Lakshmi-Durga, Father-Son-Holy Ghost, Rajas-Sattva-Tamas, body-mind-soul, Sat-Chit-Ananda, omniscience-omnipotence-omnipresence, gross-subtle-causal.

A is Brahman. M is Maya. U is interaction between the two.

Om also represents the *Tat Tvam Asi* Mahavakya. A is Jiva. M is Isvara. U connects, shows the identity of Jiva and Isvara or Brahman.

Om is very, very important. It should be worshipped. It should be chanted loudly. It should be repeated mentally with meaning and Bhava. It should be meditated upon.

The Power of Om-Chanting

A loud sound is produced in chanting Om. Om is repeated with a big sound with three and a half Matras. The Pranava sound is generated in the navel with the sound O, and taken up very slowly to the Brahmarandhra on the top of the head with the closing sound M. The vibration of M is prolonged for some time.

There is another kind of chanting Om with eighteen Matras. It very, very long chanting. It takes a long time. The Pranava is Deergha.

The pronunciation of the sacred syllable Om is one which has engaged the attention of all Europeans devoted to Eastern studies. The vibrations set up by this word are so powerful, that if one persists in taking recourse to them, they would bring the largest building to the ground. This seems difficult to believe in until one has tried the practice; but once having tried it, one can easily understand how the above statement may be true and perfectly correct. I have tested the power of the vibrations and can quite believe that the effect would be as stated.

Pronounced as spelt, the chanting of Om will have a certain effect upon the student; but pronounced in its correct method, it arouses and transforms every atom in his physical body, setting up new vibrations and conditions, and awakening the sleeping power of the body.

The chanting of Om drives away all worldly thoughts and removes distraction. It is very powerful. The Pancha Koshas vibrate rhythmically when Om is chanted. Chanting of Om infuses new vigour in the body. Five persons can sit in a circle and then can chant Om in a chorus. It will be beautiful and exhilarating. All can at once feel a new life.

When you feel depressed, chant Om fifty times. You will be filled with new vigour and strength. Chanting of Om is a powerful tonic. You need not pay anything to the doctor. When you chant Om, feel you are the pure, all-pervading light and consciousness.

Those who chant Om will have a powerful, sweet voice. Ekagrata of mind comes quickly by chanting Om. When you take walk in the morning and evening, you can chant Om nicely. Chant Om in a moonlit night. Chant Om when you walk along the seaside or the banks of a river. You can sing Om in a beautiful way also. The rhythmic pronunciation of Om makes the mind serene and one-pointed and induces the spiritual qualifications which ensure Self-realisation.

The Greatest of all Mantras

The Pranava or Om is the greatest of all Mantras. It bestows directly liberation. All Mantras begin with Om. Om is the life or soul of all Mantras. It precedes the Panchakshari and the Ashtakshari. Every hymn begins with Om. Every Upanishad begins with Om. The Gayatri begins with Om. The oblations that are offered to the various gods are preceded by the chanting of Om. The Archanas, *viz.*, the Ashtottari, the Trisati, and the Sahasranama are also preceded by the Pranava. The greatness of the Omkara cannot be adequately described by anybody. Even Parvati, Adisesha, and great sages were unable to describe the greatness of Om. Such is the potency or Mahima of Om.

What *Sree Ram* Mantra is for a Vairagi of Ayodhya, what *Hrim* is for a Tantric of Bengal, what the *Gayatri* is for a Madrasi

Brahmin, so is Om or the Pranava for a Vedantin or a Sannyasin of Rishikesh.

Om is otherwise known as Omkara, Ekakshara, or Udgitha in the Chhandogya Upanishad. Any man or woman whose mind is sincerely turned towards Brahman, who has mental Sannyasa, and who has Vedantic Samskaras and real taste in Vedanta, can repeat this Mantra.

Those who do Japa of Om daily will get tremendous power. They will have lustre in the eyes and the face.

Meditation on Om

Have the picture of Om in front of you in your meditation room. Concentrate on this picture. Do Trataka also with open eyes, steady gazing without winking till tears flow profusely. Associate the ideas of infinity, eternity, immortality, etc., when you think of Om.

Neophytes in the path of Jnana Yoga should do Trataka, gazing on Om with open eyes, in the beginning for about three months. Then they should visualise Om with closed eyes. Visualisation of Om is the calling up of a clear mental image of Om by closing the eyes. They should repeat Om mentally with Bhava and meaning, and make the ears hear the sound also so that they may not run outside to hear other sounds.

Meditate on Om. Retire into your meditation chamber. Sit on Padma, Siddha, or Sukha Asana. Close the eyes. Relax the muscles and nerves completely. Concentrate the gaze on Trikuti, the space between the two eyebrows. Silence the objective or conscious mind. Repeat Om mentally with Suddha-bhavana or Brahma-bhavana.

This Bhavana is a *sine qua non.* You will have to repeat Om with the Bhava or feeling that you are the infinite, all-pervading, pure intelligence. Mere gramophonic repetition or parrot-like repetition of Om will not bring out the desired result.

When you think of Om, you will have to think of Brahman, the thing signified by the symbol. Association with Om is to become one with the signified. Try to identify yourself with the all-blissful Self when you meditate on Om.

Keep the meaning of Om always at heart. Feel Om. Feel that you are the all-pervading, infinite Light. Feel that you are the pure, perfect, all-knowing, eternally free Brahman. Feel you are absolute consciousness. Feel that you are infinite, unchanging existence. Every atom, every molecule, every nerve, vein and artery should powerfully vibrate with these ideas. Lip-repetition of Om will not produce much benefit. It should be through the heart, head and soul. Your whole soul should feel you are the subtle, all-pervading intelligence. This feeling should be kept up all twenty-four hours.

Convert a room into a forest. Renounce the idea that you are different from Brahman. Practise regularly, steadily, with interest, faith, zeal, perseverance and enthusiasm. Have congenial company, and light Sattvic food as milk, curd, fruits, nuts, Moong-kidal, rice and bread. Practise for three hours in the morning from 4 a.m. to 7 a.m., and three hours at night from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Keep up the Brahmic feeling while at work also. You are bound to succeed in three or four years. You will rest in your own Svarupa, in your own Suddha Sat-Chit-Ananda state. *Nastyatra Samsayah*: there is no doubt of that here.

Remember Om Always

Remember Om. Remember *Soham, Om Soham, Sivoham, Aham Brahma Asmi, Analhaq*. Truth is one. These Mantras remind you of your identity with Supreme Soul. They are Mahavakyas, great sentences of the Upanishads. They blow out this little false ego, this illusory 'I', into airy nothing.

Om is your birthright. It is the common heritage of all. It is the common property of all the people of the world. It is the word of power. It brings inspiration and intuition. It elevates the mind to spiritual heights of ineffable splendour and glory.

Om is your spiritual food. Om is your spiritual tonic and vitamin. It is full of divine potencies. It is your constant companion. It is your saviour. It is your joy and life. Live in it day and night. Be absorbed in it.

Live in Om. Meditate on Om. Inhale and exhale Om. Rest peacefully in Om. Take shelter in Om.

Sing Om rhythmically. Chant Om loudly. Roar Om forcibly. Repeat Om mentally. Draw strength from Om. Get inspiration from Om. Derive energy from Om. Imbibe bliss from Om. All desires will vanish. You will attain Self-realisation.

Rely on Om. Reflect on Om. Concentrate on Om. Meditate on Om. Know this sacred syllable Om. You will know everything. You will attain the highest knowledge.

The sacred word Om is the bow. The mind is the arrow. Brahman is the aim or mark. It is to be hit by one whose thoughts are concentrated. Then he will enter the target. He will become of the same nature as Brahman. Just as the lump of ice becomes one with water of the bucket, so also, he will become one with Brahman.

* * *

NATURE OF BRAHMAN

Though the world is full of misery, yet Brahman is all pure. He remains always untouched by evil. As youth, childhood and old age belong to the body only and not to the Self, as blindness and deafness, etc., belong to the senses and not to the Self, so also the defects of the world do not belong to Brahman.

—**Swami Sivananda**

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THE INTEGRATED LIFE ACCORDING TO THE BRAHMA SUTRA

(SRI SWAMI KRISHNANANDA)

We must know that things are not moving according to our prejudices, according to our religion, according to our custom, our cult and the cultural background into which we were born. All these have no connection with the truths of life. Usually, we do not want to know the truth as it is. We are men and women, we are from India and America, we are religious or not religious, we are socialists or Marxists, we are philosophers, we are businessmen, and we are merchants.

These things have no meaning if we look at things from the point of view of the whole world. We should transfer our mind to the total world, as if the world alone is thinking. We should not think like a person belonging to any place, but should think like the whole world thinking. The world has no men and women; it may not even know that we are existing as persons. The world has no difference of any kind within itself; the world is a big organism like our body. It has no caste, it has no religion, it has no philosophy, it is just what it is. Can you live a life like that? Just be what it is.

Why I am saying all this is that one aphorism in the Brahma Sutras is very intriguing, which no commentator has explained properly. This Sutra is based on the following concluding passage in the Chandogya Upanishad: 'One who has studied the Vedas from the teacher according to rule, in the time left over from doing service to the teacher, he, who after having come back, settles down in a home, continues the study in more detail, who concentrates all his senses in the Self, who practises non-hatred to all creatures, he who behaves thus throughout his life, reaches the world of the Creator.' '*Kritsna-bhavat-tu Grihinopasamharah*' (III. 4. 48), is the Sutra used to explain the life of a householder. The meaning of the Sutra is that the life of a householder is integral. Unfortunately, all the commentators on the Brahma Sutras are Sannyasins. No Sannyasin will accept that a householder is leading an integral life. They will say Sannyasa is higher. Here also there is some prejudice seen. We should never bring ideas of higher and lower in the scheme of things as they are. Sannyasins abhor the word 'householder'. But how will they write a commentary on this Sutra? They are handicapped in saying anything here. They cannot say that the life of a householder is wholesome; the general idea is that the life of a householder is one of attachment to family, property, and relations. Then what does this Sutra mean? How is a householder integral? Neither can the Sannyasins accept that the householder is integral, nor can they say that the Brahma

Sutra is saying something wrong, because everyone has high respect for the Brahma Sutra. It would be like Christians saying that the Bible is wrong, the New Testament is wrong, Christ's teachings are wrong. One cannot say that, since these are holy words. You may disagree with them but you cannot say they are wrong. So, what the commentators do is that they glide over this Sutra. They write only two lines according to the Upanishads—the householder's life is considered as integral—they won't say anything more, and pass on. I saw many commentaries to understand what is this secret. No commentary went into the depth of the Sutra.

We have cultural prejudice, linguitic prejudice, ethnic prejudice, anthropological prejudice, man-woman prejudice, and we cannot get over these easily. In this condition you can never reach God, it is not possible. God is neither a man nor a woman. He is neither a Brahmin nor a Kshatriya; He is not an Englishman or a Frenchman or an Indian. In what capacity are we going to God? 'Oh, I am Christian, my God, I have come.' 'I am, a Brahmin, my God, I am coming to attain salvation.' God is just 'I-AM-WHAT-I-AM'

In what capacity will anyone go to God? Any idea we have about ourselves is basically wrong; and it is not possible to free ourselves from this habit as long as we have a pre-oriented individuality born into a particular family, culture and morality. Morality also differs, it is not universally a unanimous thing working everywhere in the same way.

There is free life in America and Europe; everybody is free and a broadly unconditioned life is allowed there, barring what is illegal. In India, there are great restrictions. For eating there is one restriction, for washing one restriction, for moving one restriction, for standing and sitting and looking, and reading. There is an ordinance for everything. The West has a free culture. Because of an instinct in every person to be free and not to be shackled by anybody else, everyone wants to follow the trend of Western culture. Even an orthodox Brahmin does not like his religion, he removes his hair and makes a crop, and puts on a tie. People think that it is high culture. What is it that attracts a person like that? Freedom, indeterminism, a kind of non-restriction of behaviour. Who does not like freedom? These days the world is following Western culture everywhere. Whatever country it is, all have the same Western dress, same tie, same way of thinking. Why? There is something deep in us, which is not in accordance with our adopted religions.

We were discussing earlier the nature of *Moksha*. What is liberation? Where do we go when we reach the state of perfect freedom and immortality? All sorts of answers are given. Some say you can only be near God, some say you can be in the vicinity of God, you can be only in the kingdom of God. Some say you can just sit near God; some say you can be God Himself. All these ideas arise because of our way of thinking. "As you think, so will you become." The kind of freedom we expect will be the freedom we conjure up in our minds. As the kind of freedom we are expecting is conditioned by our empirical way of thinking, we cannot answer the question 'what is liberation'. If we have a logic, which is pragmatic, empirical, and practical, we cannot go beyond it. Now, is God thinking in the same way? Has He a logic that is inferential or deductive? Does God argue? Does He require an argument to establish His Existence?

Now I am coming to the point of the householder. All this that I have said is an introduction to this interesting subject. A householder is not to be considered as a man of attachment; he has to lead a purely integral life. He is a highly disciplined person. A married man is not necessarily a man of attachment. Attachment is prohibited everywhere. A person should marry for reasons of a different nature altogether. He cannot be attached to his wife, though he has a duty to her, he cannot be attached to his property, he cannot be attached even to his son and daughter. But he has an impersonal duty to perform. That there is such a thing as 'duty' without 'attachment' is normally hard to conceive. The word 'householder' has a meaning only in India; there is no householder and all that in other countries. There are four gradational achievements or attainments conceived in ancient times in India, for the development of the person. In the beginning it is conservation of energy, which is called Brahmacharya. The study of holy scriptures, service to Guru and maintaining self-control are the duties at this stage. Ancient Brahmacharins were great and powerful persons; if they uttered a word, it would immediately materialise. Brahmacharins are feared, one cannot irritate or play jokes with them. They are a magazine of energy.

Brahmacharya is the initial stage consisting of conservation of energy. In ancient days, it was believed that a person would live for a hundred years. Therefore, the calculation is that for twenty-five years one must live like a Brahmachari, with energy arising out of self control and the study of holy scriptures, and the service of Guru. After that one enters married life and he fulfils the duties of a householder. The duties of a householder are interesting to note. It is not attachment to family; that would be far away from the truth. In Indian culture, attachment is never allowed. Duty is emphasised as the very purpose of life. The fulfilment of the means of personal and social relationship is the duty of a householder. In the early days of a Brahmachari, he is concerned only with himself. However, it is not always possible to be living only by oneself, because there is society also outside. There are impulses of self restraint and also impulses of social relation. There are impulses of acquiring wealth, there are impulses of seeing beauty, and there are impulses of being charitable to people. This is why the Sutra says the householder's life is integral. He is a highly respected person, not because he has a family but because he is engaged in doing his duty. Such a person is difficult to find, these days. The principle is not at fault merely because it is not followed due to the insistence of the lower instincts. Nobody has time to think over this matter, because there is no one without prejudice and selfishness. The integral life is a life of non-attachment on one side and freedom from hatred on another side. That is why it is called integral. When the social relationships are well-fed and taken care of, and the needs of the instinct of living a family life are also matured systematically, impartially, the householder retires from this duty to have relations with society, relations with anybody. Retirement means the freedom from the necessity to be involved in social relations. Social relations are very important; nobody can free oneself from this truth of life. But once one has passed through that stage and has graduated from that stage, then a tendency to super-individuality creeps in. Up to this level, people were individuals. Brahmacharis are individuals of one kind, the householder is an individual of a different kind. Now, there is a concept of the super-individual who does not think in terms of personal self-restraint, study, Guru-seva etc., nor does he think of social relations, but dedicates himself to uniting his mind with universal relations. This is a higher stage above that of a householder. This stage has nothing to do with any kind of dress or gesture. One must be careful and impartial in thinking, be highly dispassionate and true to one's conscience. There is a grandeur in universal relations. All that the Brahmachari did in his individual capacity, all that the householder did in his social capacity are all transcended in the supermental operation in terms of universal relations. That is the Vanaprastha, a stage staggering to thought.

Then comes Sannyasa. A Sannyasin does not just mean a person who is wearing ochre cloth, which is again a social restriction, a social distinction. A person whose mind is centred in the Universal Absolute, that person is more than a super- individual, he is a Cosmic Individual; known as 'Jivanmukta'. Sannyasins are respected as God Himself, not because they have a shaven head and have put on the cloth, but because their minds are centred in Absolute Being.

All this is the reason why the Brahma Sutra is saying that the householder's life is integral. I was thinking I must touch this point; it is certainly better to be impartial and free from prejudice. Don't be afraid of the restrictions set by religions and cultural distinctions and ethnic patterns.

Science cannot be belittled merely because it makes bombs. Science is not a way of producing destructive weapons. It is rather a system of thinking and an operation in terms of the law of the universe.

Here is the commentary that one can find on this intriguing Sutra, difficult to understand. Even an understanding of the Brahma Sutras will purify the mind. We are not what we are thinking ourselves to be. We belong to another kingdom of eternal values.

Truly understood, the ideal householder's life is almost a miracle. He conserves energy like the Brahmachari in a more widened way. The self-restraint of the Brahmachari is personal and individual. The householder's self-restraint is more difficult because he has to maintain self-restraint personally on the one hand and also be restrained in family relations and the wider human society by restrained behaviour of non-attachment coupled simultaneously with duty towards everyone in every field of duty. He feeds the Brahmacharis and Sanyasins, very important to note, and feeds guests with love even sacrificing his own meal when necessary. He takes care of animals around, would not hurt even ants in the house by leading them out peacefully. He worships God like the Sannyasin, reads the holy lore like the Brahmachari, and is detached from emotional contacts like the Vanaprastha. His life is a continuous sacrifice. Rightly, the Brahma Sutra mentions him specially as the one whose life is perfectly integrated.

The scheme detailed above is a scientific system which frees a person from psychopathic reactions and turbulence of emotion that may result from overdoing things, erroneously asking for double promotion in one's spiritual search, ending in anger, disgust, vengeance, vindictiveness, and hatred towards everything. The mentioned scheme avoids these pitfalls and healthily enables one to rise to the level of a veritable God walking on earth.

The attempt to overstep the householder's duties and seek the universal aspirations of a Sannyasin directly from the Brahmacharya stage is, indeed, a highly ambitious and laudable enterprise. But here is also a danger. The universal will reject the entry into itself of any element alien to its nature. It is difficult to believe that the individual sense of the Brahmachari can suddenly effloresce into the universal longings of the Sannyasin. People, mostly, suffer a shipwreck here and turn into arrogant and irate specimens due to conjuring up a false imagination of high achievements, while there are actually none. Great things require a great price in the form of determined meditations.

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ON THE THEORY OF REINCARNATION

(SRI H.S. SPENCER)

Reincarnation today is not accepted as a scientifically proven fact though it is, or may be, the best possible explanation of all the mental, moral and economic inequalities and differences noticeable between individuals. And yet it is possible to put the theory to test and prove it scientifically in various ways, in all of which psychical research societies and in some of which psycho-analysts can take an important and decisive part.

The first of such ways is by means of the hypnotic trance. Once a person under the influence of hypnosis becomes objectively unconscious, it should be possible to reach his subjective consciousness or his sub-conscious mind, which according to the theory of reincarnation, is said to be brought with him from past incarnations and which is the store-house of all his past experiences. This subjective consciousness ought, therefore, to be aware of that person's past births and so details about such births may be gathered for a large number of cases and if they are verified by subsequent search according to the directions obtained during the hypnosis, there would not remain any doubt as to the truth of such previous births. In this way the question can be settled once for all. Here is work for psychical research societies and psycho-analysts.

This line of research is suggested by the part played by hypnosis in the early history of psycho-analysis and psycho-therapy. The development of psycho-analysis and therapy started with experiments in hypnosis, as shown by Geraldine Coster, in Chapter V of her book *Yoga* and *Western Psychology*. On page 52, she says; "These experiments had taken the first step towards demonstrating the reality of the unconscious mind, the basic conception on which all analytical therapy depends."

Hypnosis was used by Charcot and Janet for the cure of physical diseases and its use was later extended by Freud and others to the diagnosing and elimination of mental disorders. It is true that in as much as cures by hypnosis were found to be uncertain and often only temporary, Freud subsequently elaborated a "skilled technique" for reaching the sub-conscious mind of his patients while fully awake, and thus ensuring a permanent cure which "was dependent on the full linking up of the two states of consciousness" viz., the waking and the dormant or the objective and the subjective.

The suggestion made here about using hypnosis as a means of reaching the subconscious for the sake of ascertaining the past experiences of the Ego in its former incarnations is therefore a possible and useful extension of the same method as was at first employed for the cure of physical ills and then of mental troubles.

The method, however, is open to the serious objection that it may be put to undesirable selfish ends by unscrupulous investigators. If this can be effectively safeguarded against, there are very many great possibilities existent in it of not only ascertaining incontrovertible evidence of the fact of reincarnation, but also of very important data for the all-round development and happiness of the individual whose sub-conscious is so contacted.

It may be argued that Freud's technique now obviates this danger but the danger of the unscrupulous use of the revelations even so received, still remains. There is also the further possibility that Freud's method may not after all succeed on account of the active operation of the individual will which would be inoperative in hypnosis.

The most effective safeguard against the danger of the unscrupulous use of hypnosis and its results or that of the Freudian technique and its results, would seem to be to limit the use of either only to accepted psychical research institutes of repute and expert psycho-analysts of repute. Any improper use of the results of the working of these institutes and practitioners of repute can also be further guarded against by strictly enforced rules of secrecy, and limitation of communication and publicity.

A variation upon this line of research would be the use of mediumism in place of hypnotic trance. The form of mediumism may be either automatic or planchette or ouija board writing, or any one of the forms of trance mediumship such as vocal or trumpet or direct voice mediumship. But here the difficulty is that the Guides on the other side may or may not consent to reveal the secrets about the previous incarnations of the sitters even though they voluntarily ask for the information in their proper person. Some Guides and communicators from the other side may even not be able to do so for want of access to the proper Akashic records. Some of them, however, only may do so and that too in some cases only.

If the sole real purpose of life is so to evolve as to become one with the Source of All Life, then all branches of knowledge, all sciences, should be made and utilised to subserve that great purpose; and the spiritual science which shows the stage of development or progress reached in the fulfilment of that great purpose should explain the ways and means whereby that purpose may be best accelerated in the present span of life, and how that present acceleration can help further acceleration in the lives, if any, to be. In other worlds, it should be able to explain in terms of what is called Sanchita Karma, the present or Prarabdha Karma and to guide how things can be mended to the individual's Atmic advantage.

Sanchita Karma is the whole of the accumulated Karma of the past and Prarabdha Karma is that part of it which a Jivatma has come to pay off or experience the fruits of in the present incarnation. This means that

Sanchita Karma is much wider than Prarabdha. According to the present writer's understanding of the law of Karma, Jivatma incarnates to pay off as many of its Karmic debts in any particular incarnation as it can. It is not ordinarily possible for it to pay off all its debts in one incarnation. But what may happen is that if it is fortunate enough to get proper spiritual guidance, it tries to pay off many more debts than it comes to pay off. It then turns out that the course of events in the life of that Jivatma seems to run wide out of the course shown by astrological signs. That does not mean that the science of astrology is wrong. It only means that this jumping out of the Karmic orbit is due to what may be called higher spiritual laws whose action is more compelling. Nor is it against the law of Karma. In fact it is very much the accentuated operation of the law of Karma itself.

In this view of the Prarabdha Karma it is implied that this Karma should necessarily consist for the most part of what is usually called bad or evil Karma, the results of which however are equally necessarily modified by the good portion of the Sanchita Karma. The Karmic debts which one incarnates to pay off are therefore the resultant of the forces of evil and good Karmas of the past.

It also follows that the major portion of the good Sanchita Karma remains accumulated and necessarily so, because without such accumulation, spiritual progress and development to spiritual perfection would be impossible.

There is yet another line of research and investigation for ascertaining the proof of reincarnation and it is connected with Yoga and Yogis. It is a line which is meant for psychical research societies and not for psycho-analysis.

It is a well-known fact that Yogis are able to look back into past lives—their own and those of others. They are able to do so because besides direct knowledge from direct contact with other Atmas, they are able to read what are known as Akashic records with their Yogic vision. Even some psychic persons who are not Yogis, are sometimes made aware of their past lives. This happens when they are shown astral or etheric pictures of events and incidents out of those lives, either in a waking state or in dreams. But this is different to the Yogis' direct knowledge from direct Atmic contacts and from Akashic records. These are records preserved in the Manasic and Astral worlds, and we are told that they are very lasting—practically speaking, indestructible and more or less permanent.

Investigating parties from psychical research societies can contact Yogis and try to collect from them facts as to the past lives of different persons who are willing to offer themselves as subjects of investigation, and then try to get these facts verified either actually and directly or, if that be impossible, by the indirect testimony of astrological readings as explained above. Even individual psychical research investigators can undertake the rigorous discipline of the different systems of Yoga and having reached the perfection of Yoga, can verify out of their personal experience the truth about the powers of Yogis to look back into and read past lives.

Success in this Yogic method will entail a good Yogic development in the investigator; and as all true Yogic development depends primarily upon a good moral foundation, the danger of any unscrupulous use of the revelations brought out is very much reduced, one might say almost obliterated. At the same time, the possibility of wilful opposition from the subject under consideration is almost non-existent, because in such Yogic investigation, besides the reading of the Akashic records, the contact sought is purely Atmic and it is a condition precedent to such contact that the Atma of the subject under investigation is a willing partner in the operation. No Yogic Atma would ever force its decision or will upon any other Jivatma.

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PARABLE OF THE MOTHER-IN-LAW AND THE BEGGAR

A beggar came to the house when the mother-in-law was away and the daughter-in-law refused to give alms. The beggar went away. The mother-in-law met him on the road. He told her that her daughter-in-law had refused to give her alms. "What right had she?" roared the mother-in-law, "come with me." The beggar came back to the house, full of expectation. As soon as she reached the house, she turned round and said: "Get away. I won't give you alms. But even for this refusal only I have the right in this house and not my daughter-in-law."

Even so, when a man turns away from the objects of the world, out of disgust, the spiritual preceptor admonishes him and points out to him that he should not remain inactive, or shun the world. For a while, he seems to preach activism, on the theory that the world is a solid reality! He asks the Sadhaka to work, to serve all and to love all, as though the 'many' exist. In due course, the Sadhaka attains Self-realisation. Then he abandons all worldliness, truly renounces the world, and remains immersed in the Consciousness of the One. But here the renunciation is born of Self-realisation. He has the authority to renounce; and he alone can renounce the world and all activity. He has realised the One Self in all. The aspirant has Ajnana-Vairagya, Vairagya generated by the painful nature of the world; the saint has Jnana-Vairagya or Vairagya born of the realisation of the essential nature of the Self which is One, Indivisible, All-pervading Consciousness, the Great Indwelling Presence, realising which man longs for nothing else.

—Swami Sivananda

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THE JNANI IS THE GREATEST BHAKTA

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

Bhagavan Sri Sankaracharya defines Bhakti as devotion unto Atman. You cannot entirely separate Bhakti from Jnana. When Bhakti matures, it becomes transmuted into Jnana. A real Jnani is a devotee of Lord Hari, Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Lord Siva, Durga, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Lord Jesus and Buddha. He is a *Samarasa* Bhakta. Some ignorant people think that a Jnani is a dry man and has no devotion. This is a sad mistake. A Jnani has a very very large heart. Go through the hymns of Sri Sankaracharya and try to gauge the depth of his devotion. Go through the writings of Sri Appaya Dikshitar and measure the magnificent depths of his unbounded devotion.

Swami Rama Tirtha was a Jnani. Was he not a Bhakta of Lord Krishna? If a Vedantin excludes Bhakti, remember, he has not really grasped and understood Vedanta. The same Nirguna Brahman manifests with a little Maya in a corner as Saguna Brahman for the pious worship of His devotees. Ishwara is His Tatastha-Lakshna only.

Lord Krishna takes a Jnani as a first class Bhakta. "Of these, the wise, constantly harmonised, worshipping the One, is the best; I am supremely dear to the wise, and he is dear to Me. Noble are all these, but I hold the wise as verily Myself; he self-united is fixed on Me, the highest path." (Gita: Chapter VII-17, 18).

Bhakti is not divorced from Jnana. On the contrary Jnana intensifies Bhakti. He who has knowledge of Vedanta is well established in his devotion. He is steady and firm. Some ignorant people say that if a Bhakta studies Vedanta, he will lose his devotion. This is wrong. Study of Vedanta is an auxiliary to increase and develop one's devotion. The devotion of a man proficient in Vedantic literature, is well-grounded. Bhakti and Jnana are like the two wings of a bird to help one to fly unto Brahman, to the summit of Mukti.

Read the following with rapt attention. Sukadev was a perfect Jnani. He was an Avadhuta. How is it then that he studied the Bhagavata and held Katha for seven days for Raja Parikshit? This is a wonder of wonders! He was a perfect Jnani who was absorbed in his Brahmanishtha; yet he came down from his heights and preached devotion. Did he lose his Atma-jnana? What is the truth here? Sri Veda Vyasa wrote the eithteen Puranas for the benefit of the world. He wrote the Mahabharata which deals more with Pravritti. Yet he was not satisfied in his heart of hearts. He was quite uneasy and restless. Narada met Vyasa and enquired: "What is the matter with you, O Vyasa? You are in a sunken, depressed mood?" Vyasa spoke out his heart. Then Narada said: "You will have to write a book which treats Krishna-Prema and the Lilas of Lord Krishna. Then only you will have peace of mind." Then Vyasa wrote the Bhagavata, a book that overbrims with Bhakti Rasa and Kirtan of Hari. Rishis studied Bhagavata and held Kathas in a lonely forest in the vicinity of Sukadev's hermitage. Sukadev was very much attracted towards the Katha of the Rishis. He directly proceeded to his father and studied the Bhagavata under him. Then only he taught Bhagavata to Raja Parikshit.

Look at the devotion of Sukadev! From this incident it is quite clear that devotion and Jnana are inseparable and a Jnani is a greatest Bhakta and those Vedantins who speak ill of devotion are deluded, ignorant persons.

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PEACE AND PATIENCE

(SRI S. SUBBA RAO)

There is an infinite patience in nature which it is profitable to contemplate. A comet may take a thousand years to complete its orbit; the sea may occupy ten thousand years in wearing away the land; the complete evolution of the human race may occupy millions of years. This should make us ashamed of our hurry, fussiness, discontent, disappointments and ridiculous self-importance over trifling things of an hour or a day. Patience is conducive to the highest greatness, the most far-reaching usefulness and the profoundest peace. Without it, life will lose much of its power and influence and its joy will be largely destroyed. 'So with well-ordered strenuousness, raise thou thy structure of success', says a poet.

Despondency, anxiety, worry and irritability cannot cure the ills against which they are directed. They only add more misery to the troubles that prompt them. The cultivation of a steadfast and serene spirit cannot be overlooked if life is to yield any measure of usefulness and happiness. The trifles, and even greater troubles, which annoy would soon dissolve and disappear if confronted with a temper that refuses to be ruffled and disturbed. Personal aims, wishes, schemes and pleasures will meet with checks, rebuffs and obstacles; and it is in learning to meet these reverses in a wise and calm spirit that we discover the true and abiding happiness within our heart.

The storm may rage without, but it cannot affect us if there is peace within. As by the fireside there is security from the fiercest storm, so the heart that is steadfast in knowledge and Truth abides in peace, though all around be strife and perturbation. The bitter opposition of men and the unrest of the world cannot make us bitter and restless unless we enter into and co-operate with them. Rather, if we have peace in our heart, the outer turmoil will cause our peace to deepen, to take firmer root and to show forth more abundantly in works of peace for the softening of human hearts and the enlightening of human minds. Blessed is he who has no wrongs to remember, no injuries to forget, in whose pure heart no hateful thought about another can take root and flourish. When a storm has subsided and all is calm again, observe how all nature seems to pause in a restorative silence. A restful quiet pervades all things, so that even inanimate objects seem to participate in the recuperative repose. So when a too violent eagerness or a sudden burst of passion has spent itself, there comes a period of reflective thoughts, a time of calm, in which the mind is restored and things are seen in their true outlines and right proportions. It is wise to take advantage of this quiet time by gaining a true knowledge of one's self and forming a more kindly judgement of others. The hour of calm is the hour of restoration.

Joy comes and fills the self-emptied heart; it abides with the peaceful; its reign is with the pure. 'The peace which passeth understanding' is a peace which no event or circumstance can shake or mar, because it is not merely a passing calm between two storms, but is an abiding peace that is born of knowledge. Men have not this peace, because they do not understand and know, because they are blinded and rendered ignorant by their own errors and impurities; and whilst they are unwilling to give these up, they cannot but remain entirely ignorant of impersonal principles.

The wise man knows. For him anxiety, fear, disappointment and unrest have ceased and under whatever condition or circumstance he may be placed, his calmness will not be broken, and he will blend and adjust everything with capacity and wisdom. Nothing will cause him grief. When friends yield up the body of flesh, he knows that they still are and does not sorrow over the shell they have discarded. None can injure him, for he has identified himself with that which is unaffected by change. The knowledge which brings peace, then, is the knowledge of unchangeable principles arrived at by the practice of pure goodness, righteousness, becoming one with which a man becomes immortal, unchangeable, and indestructible. As there are depths in the ocean which the fiercest storm cannot reach, so are there silent, holy depths in the heart of man which the storms of sin and sorrow can never disturb. To reach this silence and to live consciously in it is *peace*.

Discord is life in the outward world, but unbroken harmony holds sway at the heart of the universe. The human soul reaches blindly towards the harmony of the sinless state, and to reach this state and to live consciously in it is peace. Come away, for a while, from external things, from the presence of the senses, from the arguments of the intellect, from the noise and the excitements of the world, and withdraw yourself into the innermost chamber of your heart, and there free from the sacrilegious intrusion of all selfish desires, you will find a holy calm, a blissful repose; the faultless eyes of truth will open within you and you will see things as they really are.

Men cry for peace where there is no peace, but the contrary,—discord, disquietitude and strife. Apart from that wisdom which is inseparable from self-renunciation, there can be no real and abiding peace. The peace which results from social comfort, passing gratification or worldly victory is transitory in its nature and is burnt up in the heat of fiery trial and only the selfless heart can know the Peace of heaven. Holiness alone is undying peace. Self-control leads to it and the ever increasing Light of Wisdom guides the pilgrim on his way. It is partaken of in a measure as soon as the path of virtue is entered upon, but it is only realised in its fullness when self disappears in the communication of a stainless life.

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Men pray for peace, yet cling to passion; they foster strife, yet pray for heavenly rest. This is ignorance, profound spiritual ignorance; it is not to know the first letter in the alphabet of things divine. Hatred and love, strife and peace cannot dwell together in the same heart. Where one is admitted as a welcome guest, the other be turned away as an unwelcome stranger. He who despises another will be despised by others; he who opposes his fellow men will himself be resisted. He should not be surprised and mourn that men are divided. He should know that he is propagating strife. If you would realise the joy that never ends and the tranquillity that cannot be disturbed; if you would leave behind for ever your sins, your sorrows, your anxieties and perplexities; if you would partake of this salvation, this glorious life, then you would conquer yourself. Bring every thought, every impulse, every desire into perfect obedience to the divine power resident within you. There is no other way to peace but this; and if you refuse to walk it your much praying, your strict adherence to ritual will be fruitless and unavailing and neither gods nor angels can help you.

Calmness, as distinguished from the dead placidity of languor, is the acme of concentrated energy. There is a focussed mentality behind it. In agitation and excitement the mentality is dispersed. It is irresponsible and without force or weight. The fussy, peevish, irritable man has no influence. He repels, not attracts. He wonders why his easy-going neighbour succeeds and is sought after, while he, who is always hurrying, worrying and troubling, fails and is avoided. His neighbour, being a calmer man, not more easy-going but more deliberate, gets through more work, does it more skilfully and is more self-possessed and manly. This is the reason for his success and influence. His energy is controlled and used, while the other man's is dispersed and abused.

Where calmness is there is the greatest power, it is the sure indication of a strong, well trained, patiently disciplined mind. The calm man knows his business, be sure of it. His words are few but they tell. His schemes are well planned and they work true, like a well balanced machine. He sees a long way ahead and makes straight for his object. The enemy, difficulty, he converts into a friend and makes profitable use of him, for he has studied well how to 'agree' with his adversary; he has anticipated all emergencies. Indeed, he is the man who is prepared beforehand. In his meditations, in the counsels of his judgement, he has conferred with causes and has caught the bent of all contingencies. He is never taken by surprise, is safe in the keeping up of his own steadfastness, and is sure of his ground.

The divine within is the abode of peace, the temple of wisdom and the dwelling place of immortality. Apart from this inward resting place, there can be no true peace, no knowledge of the Divine; and if you can remain there for one minute, one hour or one day, it is possible for you to remain there always. All your sins, sorrows, fears, anxieties are your own and you can cling to them or give them up. Of your own accord you cling to your unrest; of your own accord you can come to abiding peace. No one else can give up sin for you; you must give it up yourself. The greatest Teacher can do no more than walk the way of Truth for himself and point it out to you; yourself must walk it for yourself. You can obtain freedom and peace by your own efforts alone, by yielding up that which binds the soul and which is destructive of Peace.

* * *

PARABLE OF THE SUSPICIOUS MAN WHO GOT DROWNED

Two men are standing on a rock in the ocean, away from the shore. It is getting dark. Clouds are gathering in the sky. Even a sight of the shore is lost. Waves are lashing on the rock. The ocean is getting turbulent.

In that darkness a man appears before them.

"Come with me, I shall take you to the shore," he says.

The wise man readily follows him.

But the fool questions: "How will you take us across the waters?"

"I have got a boat with me," says the new-comer.

"I am ready to come with you," says the wise man.

"No, I won't come," says the fool; "suppose the boat is defective or the man is a dacoit?"

The wise man gets into the boat and safely reaches the shore, guided by the boatman. The fool is quickly swallowed up by the rising waves of the ocean.

Floating along in this ocean of Samsara, the Jiva, after great struggle, gets this boon of a human birth. The other shore of safety has not yet been reached. Time is fleeting. The evening of life has set in. Eye-sight is lost. The eye of wisdom is blinded by the gathering clouds of materialism and disharmony. Perplexed and prayerful, the man stands on the rock of individual life.

The Guru comes to him with the boat of the Lord's Name or of Bhakti. He beckons man to follow him and get into the boat, and thus safely cross over to the shore. The wise man readily does so. But the fool has a thousand doubts and a million misgivings. He questions the bona fides of the Guru, and the vilidity of Bhakti. Very soon he is once again swallowed up in the huge ocean of Samsara; and, sunk in it, he has lost the greatest opportunity of saving himself, given to him by God.

—Swami Sivananda

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सनत्सुजातीयम्

धृतराष्ट्रउवाच—

कथं समृद्धमत्यर्थं तपो भवति केवलम् ।
सनत्सुजात तद्ब्रूहि कथं विद्यामहं प्रभो ॥

Katham samriddhamatyartham tapo bhavati kevalam,
Sanatsujata tat-bruhi katham vidyamaham prabho.

Dhritarashtra said—

Sanatsujata! How does pure Tapas become intensely fruitful? Please explain this to me so that I can understand.

—*Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, ii-11*

TRUTH

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

Truth is the seat of God. Truth is God. Truth alone triumphs.

Truth is the basic law of life. Truth is the means and the goal ultimate.

Truth is the law of freedom, falsehood the law of slavery and death.

Truth is Justice, fair play, adherence to the fundamental laws of ethics. Purity and truth are the twin factors that unfold and awaken the divinity that lies dormant within you and lead you to perfection.

Truthfulness is the first pillar in the Temple of God-realization. Truth is the gateway to the Kingdom of God.

Truth is like a ladder. It leads you to the Kingdom of Immortal Bliss.

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE VIRTUE

Speaking truth is the most important qualification of a Yogin. Truth is the queen of virtues. Truth is the supreme virtue.

Truth constitutes the essence of the Vedas. Control over passions constitutes the essence of truth. Self-denial or refraining from the worldly enjoyments forms the essence of self-control. These attributes are always present in a virtuous man.

Truth is righteousness. Righteousness is light, and light is bliss. Ahimsa, Brahmacharya, purity, justice, harmony, forgiveness, peace are forms of truth.

Impartiality, self-control, modesty, endurance, goodness, renunciation, meditation, dignity, fortitude, compassion, and abstention from injury are the various forms of truth.

All the above virtues, though seemingly different, have but one and the same form, namely, truth. All these hold up truth and strengthen it.

When the path of truth is trodden, everything else also is done. When the root is watered, all the branches are automatically watered.

THE SUPREME COMMANDMENT

Be truthful. All righteousness is contained in this one commandment.

Whatever you do, be true to yourself and to the world. Hide not your thoughts. Be frank. Be sincere. Be candid. Be straightforward. Be courageous to express your views.

Be faithful to your trust. Deceive not the man who relies upon you. Keep up your promise even at the cost of your life. Your life may go, but not the given word.

Do not hastily give your assent to anybody, to anything. Think deeply. Cogitate. Reflect. Say, "I shall think over the matter and talk to you later on." Thus you will not be entangled.

Do not make promises, but say, "I shall try. I shall think over the matter." You are saved. You will not be caught in the whirlpool of troubles, repentance, and sorrow.

To tell a lie is a great sin. He who utters falsehood loses the faith of other persons. People will not believe him even if he speaks the truth. The habit of telling lies becomes deep-rooted by repetition of lies. Man tells several lies to cover up one lie.

A lie concealed by another lie leads to more lies. A sin concealed by another sin leads to more sins.

A liar is a coward. Uttering falsehood is a certain mark of cowardice. Speak truth. You will become courageous.

TRUTH IS FEARLESS AND STRONG

Truth is complete in itself. Truth has a strong foundation in itself. It is bold, it has no fears. It has no limit of space or time. It is a fearless, free bird in the sky. It does not care for status. It is wealth in itself. Truth stands even when there is no public support.

Truth can be compared to a road of pasture, while falsehood can be compared to a bush of thorns. In a man who indulges in false thoughts, there is a lurking fear at every moment, an uneasiness, a fear of the self, a want of confidence and a feeling that something wrong may happen. Truth, on the other hand, is the path of righteousness which certainly leads to success in the long run. It is a straight road with no doubtful crossroads.

In the day-to-day world, it seems as though it is impracticable to strictly follow the path of truth, but if it is practised as your ideal and goal in life, you have your way. All the stumbling blocks on your road to Truth will melt away as you proceed along the direct road.

CERTAIN FALLACIES

There are certain fallacies that arise in following the straight path of truth. It is absolutely no harm for a mother who fondly nurses the child in just diverting the attention of the child by saying that the small piece of sweetmeat has been carried away by the crow a short while back, and when she shows to be extremely sorry for it and brings round the ideas of the child by saying, "Papa, do not mind it, I shall bring a bigger cake for you in the evening." It is absolutely no untruth if you do not interfere with others, wound their feelings, harm others or spoil others. If you refuse a small loan, certainly with something for you to fall back upon, if you refuse to lend your pen or any object that you would like not to lend, these cannot be counted as untruths.

VARYING CONCEPTIONS OF TRUTH

A worldly man, a moralist, and a spiritual man have different conceptions of truth. A moralist cares for the result of truth. If a man can save the lives of many innocent persons by telling a lie, it is truth for a moralist, because an untruth has brought greatest good. If the uttering of a truth brings greater harm to many persons, it is an untruth according to a moralist. According to a spiritual man, Brahman is truth; this world is unreal.

BRAHMAN: THE ONLY TRUTH

The world is untruth and the Absolute

is Truth. The world is represented by sex and ego; the Absolute is represented by the noumenal, gnostic Being.

Truth is not expressed even by Existence-Consciousness-Joy! It is only the nearest relative of Truth. Truth is even greater, grandeur, mightier, truer!

Truth is; untruth is not. Hence, it is not absolutely correct even to say that Truth is one, for Truth is Existence itself, and is neither one, nor not-one. Truth is undivided.

Truth is utterly public. It cannot be hidden even if one would try to do so. Truth persists and is expressed even in the extreme of untruth. The extreme of truth is the Absolute. Untruth is a shadow of Truth.

Everything that changes itself is untruth. Hence, Truth is infinite. Truth alone endures, while everything else perishes.

Everyone, right from Brahma down to a blade of grass, moves towards Truth, some consciously, some unconsciously. They differ only in the degree of consciousness or to the extent of mental purification or subtlety of condition. Every leaf that flies in the air, every breath that flows from us, in other words, every act of universal life, is a step taken nearer the Truth; for, Truth is the eternal home of all beings. Into it they all enter and find permanent satisfaction and peace. It is Truth that triumphs over falsehood, not falsehood over Truth, whatever the apparent and immediate experience may be.

THE PRACTICE OF TRUTH

Scriptures emphatically declare: "Speak the truth. Truth alone triumphs, falsehood never." God is Truth and Truth must be realised by speaking truth. A truthful man is absolutely free from worries and anxieties. He has a calm mind. If one observes speaking truth for twelve years, one will get 'Perfection of Speech'. Then, whatever one speaks will come to pass. There will be power in the speech of such a person.

Your thoughts should agree with your words, and the words should agree with your actions. In the world, people think of one thing, say another thing, and do another thing. This is horrible. This is nothing but crookedness. You must carefully watch your thoughts, words, and actions. The little gain that you get by telling lies is no gain at all. You pollute your conscience and infect your subconscious mind. The habit of telling lies is carried to your next birth also and you undergo suffering from birth to birth.

Meditate on truth. Derive inspiration from the lives of those who have sacrificed their all for the sake of truth. Write in bold types the words **"SPEAK TRUTH"** on cardboards and hang them in different places in your house. This will caution you when you are about to speak a lie. You will then check yourself at once. A time will come when you will be established in the habit of speaking truth. Punish yourself by fasting if you tell a lie and record the lies in a diary. Gradually the number of lies will decrease and you will become a truthful man.

Stick to the path of truth at all costs. Truth has a lustre of its own. It shines for itself and sheds its light on others. When you stick to truth as your only religion, when you strictly adhere to truth alone at all times, at all places, and on all occasions, you cannot afford to harm any one. Perfect peace and real happiness will be yours.

Have ceaseless devotion to truth. Be ready to sacrifice your all for it. You will develop a strong will. You will become fearless. You will draw immense strength and courage from the Atman or the Supreme Self within. You will attain Self-realisation.

TRUTH: THE FIRST AND THE LAST THING

Should you ask me "What is the first thing in Realisation?", I should reply "The first, second, and third thing therein, nay, all—is truthfulness."

Let truth and purity light up your career, guide your conduct, and mould your character.

If the mind is impure, Self-realisation cannot be attained even if you meditate for twenty hours daily. Even Yudhishthira had to see the hell as he once told a lie—a modified, twisted truth, in a dexterous manner.

In truth, there is no deceit. That which is simulated is untruth.

Truth can never contradict non-injury. When it does, it is no more a truth, but the selfishness of the man which is on the fore.

When truth-speaking leads another to dishonour, injury and pain, it is no longer a virtue. Then it becomes a deadly sin.

Speak what is true. Speak what is pleasant. Speak no disagreeable truth, speak no agreeable falsehood.

Truth always exists in a pure and unmixed state. Truth includes Self-restraint, absence of jealousy, forgiveness, patience, endurance, kindness, love.

Peace is truth. Truth is peace. If you want to attain peace, be truthful at all times.

Mind is exalted by truthfulness. Intellect is refined by sublime, divine ideas.

By the practice of speaking the truth, the Antahkarana is purified of its dirt. It shines like a clean mirror and reflects the divine form of the Lord with great effulgence.

All is well with him whose heart is turned towards the True. No disease, physical or mental, can assault him.

The mover towards the Truth is mighty, lives long, knows everything, and is ever delighted; for he is nearing the Almighty.

The path of Truth is a precipitous one. It is slippery and as sharp as the razor's edge. Hard it is to tread, difficult a path it is. Giants among spiritual men walk over it to the City of Perfection.

Keep company with evolved souls who tread the path of Truth. Always mark carefully what is going on in the inner mental factory. Give up all sorts of mean actions. Become a noble, magnanimous soul. Nobility is good. Magnanimity is truth. If people mock at you, keep quiet. Never retort. Excuse them. Give a Vedantic smile. Stand adamantine as that yonder rock. Will you, my dear Niranjan?

* * *

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LIBERATION HAS AN IMMEDIATE RELEVANCE

(SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA)

The supreme, ultimate goal of the Vedic way of life is *moksha* liberation. And while the immediacy of this goal has been posited and affirmed in the here and now sense of *jivan-mukti* (liberated in this life while still living), still a feeling has been created that it is something remote to be striven after, to be attained, to be reached far away, a distant goal: "*yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama* (Having gone thither, they return not: that is My supreme abode)."

But liberation has a relevance, an immediate relevance and implication as well. And perhaps if this immediate implication is not recognised, understood and grasped, then the traditional concept of liberation will always continue to be a far-off, distant and remote attainment. Perhaps we will never reach towards it.

For, there are many things—it is not only *ajnana* or ignorance—that bind the *jivatman* in this body. There are many other petty things—petty but powerful—that hold us to this earth-life consciousness, to *jivahood*. They have been binding us since birth. And, it is to liberate ourselves from this immediate bondage that a certain way of life has been prescribed for us within the context of the Vedic way of life.

The first thing we have to liberate ourselves from is selfishness. Identification with the body creates a false sense of a separate personality, an entity. And it is not only a false sense. It is a false sense of a false personality, where the falseness of the false personality is carefully veiled away from our perception. It is endowed with a sense of being a solid reality, and we are bound to it. This is the veil of *maya*.

Due to this sense of a separate identity and the idea that this personality is very, very important, there arises selfishness. A selfish person always expects something from others. And where there is expectation there is misery—there is always misery. There is also *raga-dvesha*, like and dislike, attraction and repulsion. There is anger also. All these are defects of selfishness.

But the foremost defect of selfishness is expectation. A selfish psyche or individual expects something from others, from this world, from everything, all of God's creation. And expectation means misery. So, if you want to liberate yourself from misery, you have to liberate yourself from selfishness through a new approach to life.

If your attitude becomes one of unselfishness, of selflessness, of living for others, not demanding or taking from others, you will expect nothing, but you will give everything. Then you are freed from the frustration and disappointment of non-fulfilment of expectation, because there is no expectation to be fulfilled. So the misery of non-fulfil-

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ment is out of the question for you. You eliminate it from your life. You become contented. You are a happy, cheerful, satisfied person.

We also have to gradually learn to liberate ourselves from the stern tyrannical demands of the *annamaya kosa* or the gross body. To do this, Patanjali prescribed *tapasya*. Train yourself to hardship, simplicity of life. Do not pamper your body. Do not be luxurious. Don't be a softy all your life. Do not give in to the body's demands for comfort and luxury. In its extreme form it can mean walking with bare feet and keeping your head uncovered in the hot summer sun. Thus, liberate yourself from the tyrannical stranglehold that the body has on you.

Now, this is indicative of what liberation means. Apply it to the demands that each one of the *kosas* (sheaths) makes upon your consciousness: the *pranic* sheath with its hunger and thirst, the mental sheath with its sentiments, desires, scheming, imaginations and projecting into the future. In a hundred ways they tyrannise you. But unless you liberate yourself from their tyrannical stranglehold, how can you expect supreme liberation? Unless you liberate yourself from these little attachments, these little earthly affections—sense pleasures, sense of importance—how can you expect *aparoksha-anubhuti*?

We must further liberate ourselves from earthly affections and attachments. As long as you have earthly affections and attachments, they divert your mind and they focus your attention and energy towards themselves. And, as long as your mind and heart are scattered and focussed upon various things, giving yourself with all your heart to the Supreme Reality is out of the question.

Liberating yourself from earthly attachments and affections is a preparation, an indispensable prerequisite to fulfilling the greatest of all commandments of the Lord Jesus to love the Lord thy God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul—with your entire being. We must refuse to be beguiled, attracted and entangled in created things. Say: "Now anything you have created, O Lord, but You and You alone is whom I desire, whom I long for, whom I yearn after, whom I love and cherish with all my heart's love and devotion." That is necessary if you want to have *atma-nishtha* (steady abidance in the Self).

Therefore, you must liberate yourself from the powerful pull of the senses towards their sense-objects. You must learn to recognise the hollowness of all things. What we think is pleasure is actually pain. What we think is happiness is actually misery. *Ye hi samsparsaja bhoga duhkha-yonaya eva te* (The enjoyments that are born of contacts are only wombs of pain). Thus, very, very categorically, clearly, unambiguously and unmistakably this truth has been put before us, not merely for our knowledge or information, but for making it the basis of our relationship with all the pleasurable sensations and attractions of sense-objects.

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Therefore, when this is known, curbing the senses becomes natural. You don't want to rush towards your own unhappiness. You don't want to rush towards misery and pain. The *viveki* (discriminating one) doesn't do it. The *Buddha,* one who is awakened in intellect, does not go after them. Be a wise person. Be a *viveki*. Liberate yourself from the pains that arise by expecting pleasurable sensations from things that are the source of misery and pain.

Therefore, liberate yourself from the senses that drag you towards the sense-objects. Liberate yourself from the tendency of the mind to move towards the senses. Discipline and control of the senses and conquest of the mind is also an immediate liberation. This is liberation for you. It has an immediate relevance, and unless this liberation in its immediacy is first of all recognised, pursued and attained, you cannot move forward to that ultimate liberation.

Liberation commences here and now. Liberation must be attained right here. And it is only when you know that the whole visible universe is a myth, a dream, a long drawn dream—it has no substance, it is meaningless, it is like a bubble, its value is zero—that you become liberated from the immediate oppressive sense of the so-called solid reality of this world. Vedanta alone can liberate you here and now from this oppressive sense.

You must go after two realities. If you want to dedicate yourself totally to the attainment of the Reality, it cannot have a competitor. It is either the world or God. It is either the *anatman* or the Atman. Everything created is a great jugglery of *maya*. Not only this universe, but millions and billions of universes constitute a big cipher to the true Vedantin or the true lover of God.

We should liberate ourselves right now! Liberation from this sense of reality of the outer universe brings immediate, total serenity. There is no inclination for the inner being to move either this way to that way. For one knows that one moves only towards ciphers, empty nothings. So, why burden yourself by moving towards something which has no meaning, no value, no substance?

Thus one becomes settled in the inner sanctum. Serenity prevails. Peace descends. One is always steadfastly established in a peace that is unknown to one who takes this world to be a reality.

Thus, the immediate liberation of oneself from selfishness, love of created things, the attractions of pleasurable sense-objects and the sense of reality of appearances, becomes a great blessedness, a great state of blessedness. It yields immediate dividends here and now. You don't have to wait for some far-off state. Instantaneous is the gain of this progressive process of liberating yourself from all that holds you bound to anything else other than the Supreme Reality.

Liberate yourself every moment. Keep

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on liberating yourself with every breath, every step that you take. Let your entire day-to-day living be a process of ever liberating yourself from every factor that binds you. This is the process. This is the *sadhana*—the unseen *sadhana*—known to you, seen by God and none else. Launch yourself upon this process of immediate liberation right now and get immediate gains step by step, progressively! There is no end to this immediate gain and blessedness, ever-increasing blessedness!

* * *

PARABLE OF TWO BUSINESSMEN

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

Two businessmen once set out for a distant land for doing business. They were both rich. They had heard well about the returns that their business would bring them in the new place. The first one, Rama, thought, "Let me invest my entire wealth. Even if the business be shaky in the beginning and there be initial losses, yet my foundation will be strong and I will gain in the long run." Accordingly, he invested his entire fortune and started the business in right earnest, on a well-established ground. With the usual losses in the beginning, he pulled on through the infant stages extraordinarily well and became a well-reputed businessman. As days passed by, he was getting from the establishment more profit than he ever dreamt of.

On the other hand, Govind, the second man, thought with a certain pessimistic attitude: "If I invest all my money and lose it, then I will neither have the profit from the new establishment, nor the fortune to live happily with the old wealth. So let me invest a little at first. If it is profitable, I will invest more and more of the old wealth; for, then, the new profits will help my living and there will not be any need for me to depend on the old wealth for my day-to-day living."

At first, he invested a little. That was consumed by the initial loss account. Then he invested a little, again. It too, was found to compensate only the initial loss without leaving him any profit. As years rolled on, he found that he had lost all his wealth and had nothing to live upon.

The two businessmen are like two spiritual aspirants.

Their going to a far off land is like the aspirants' going into seclusion for reaping a good spiritual harvest.

Like the businessman investing all his wealth at one time, an aspirant renounces his all at once. Like that businessman, the aspirant, too, has got his shaky beginning, but has established himself well in the spiritual path. There is no fall back or final loss. He progresses rapidly and soon attains the bliss of spiritual life, the *summum bonum* of human existence.

Akin to Govind is that aspirant who takes to seclusion foregoing a little comfort, but keeping intact his old fortune to save him in times of need. The aspirant doubts: "If I give out all my wealth and also do not succeed in attaining the Goal, I may be forced afterwards to live like a beggar in this world. So let me keep something in store. On attaining that Bliss, I shall gladly give out this wealth. If I do not attain that bliss, I shall and can utilise this wealth in this world."

This aspirant, like the second businessman, loses all his wealth when Time places its mighty hand upon him. Nor does he get the fruits of spiritual life, like Govind going without profit.

Man! Remember the words of the Lord:

"There is no initial loss here in spiritual effort, nor even reactions. Even a little understanding of this Truth (Law) will save you from very great danger."

Renounce your all, without any reservation; the fruits of spiritual life are there in your hands.

* * *

PHILOSOPHICAL DELIBERATIONS

(SRI SWAMI KRISHNANANDA)

The consideration of the nature of the Supreme Absolute is known as Ontology.

Contemplation on the nature of the Creative God is known as Theology.

The study of the nature of the world is Astronomy, Geology, Geography and History.

The study of the individual is Psychology, including Psychoanalysis.

The study of the relationship between God and the world is Cosmology.

A probe into the relationship between the world and the individual is Epistemology.

The study of the relationship between individual and God is Religion.

The study of the relationship between one individual and another individual is Sociology, which includes Economics, Ethics and Politics.

Meditation is just Total Thinking. Now, what does this mean?

Generally when a person commences meditation, there is the initial attempt to concentrate the mind on one thought or a few thoughts as one would like to entertain, and at the same time there is a simultaneous attempt of the mind to reject certain other thoughts which one considers as irrelevant, obstructive or distracting. But here, in this process, one peculiarity hidden behind is mostly forgotten. And that is the impossibility of rejecting certain thoughts and entertaining only certain other thoughts which are regarded as conducive. The question here is: how would the mind entertain some thought and reject some other thought without being simultaneously aware that the rejected thought also is existing somewhere. In order to be able to reject one particular thought the mind, which rejects the thought, should also be present in the rejected thought. Hence no thought has been rejected, for the simple reason that the consciousness of rejection is also a thought. What is the remedy now?

It is necessary here to exercise great attention and bring about a reconciliation between the chosen thought and the rejected thought. How would this be possible since it is only the mind once again that has to effect this reconciliation. This would mean that the mind has to be present in the selected thought and the rejected thought as a third thought altogether, which is something astounding even to imagine. This third thought is not the thought of the chosen object and not also the thought of the rejected object. It is what they call a *tertium quid* which is for all practical purposes a miracle which or-

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dinary thought cannot comprehend. This third thought is the total thought referred to above because it is present both in the chosen thought and the rejected thought and remains as an umpire between the chosen thought and the rejected thought.

Thus it would mean that the meditator is not the mind that is choosing a particular thought nor the one that is rejecting the thought. But to repeat once again, the total thought here Arises to a surprising in, personality of observation and the common complaint that the mind gets distracted on meditation vanishes automatically. The so-called distraction that people complain about is attachment for one thought and hatred for another thought. Meditation is not on either the chosen thought or the rejected thought but the transcendent thought which rises above both the thoughts and yet is immanent in both.

Now, another trouble may arise inspite of all this effort mentioned above. This so-called transcendent thought is also a thought. But whose thought is it? It is necessary for every aspirant to recognise the tricky character of the mind. No one can be a great trickster than the mind of one's own self. It is clever in deceiving itself. This transcendent thought, being also a thought, is to be contained in the mind, no doubt, but, beware, in a wider mind than the mind which brought about a division between the chosen thought and the rejected thought. The universe is wider than whatever the mind can think. It is therefore necessary to extend the boundary of this transcendent thought further on by making it once again a chosen thought different from any other thing that there may be in the universe. This process should go on almost indefinitely until the absolute reconciliation is achieved whereby what we call the world does not stand outside as an object to be rejected but gets reconciled with the great subjectivity achieved by the earlier processes. Philosophically this process is designated as position, opposition and reconciliation of thought by which exercise the mind rises to the concept of God Almighty in which it absorbs itself in a state of perfect union and there would be no complaint hence forth about distraction and flitting of the mind from one place to another place. A meditator should also be a good psychologist, not to teach psychology to someone else but to understand one's own mind. The greatest problem arises from one's own self and not from anyone else.

All this is to say that a spiritual thought should be a total thought, virtually a universal thought.

* * *

The more Japa you do, the more meditation you practise, the more Kirtan you sing, the more you open your heart to the Lord, through self-surrender, the more will the inner strength and health be.

—Swami Sivananda

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THE NON-DUALISM OF SHANKARA

(SRI MOTI LAL PANDIT)

Shankaracharya has been rightly accredited as being not only one of the foremost philosopher of the world, but also a saint of the highest order. Whatever he wrote or spoke reflects not only his unfathomable philosophic vision, but explains the depth of his spirituality in terms of which his metaphysics and devotional outpourings get validated and affirmed. What it in actual terms means is this: Shankara did not simply weave dogmatically the theological propositions of Advaita Vedanta, but explained and expounded them in such a manner as would be affirmed by one's own personal experience. The philosophic vision of Advaita Vedanta, as expounded by Shankara, has not simply to be tasted in terms of intellectual reflection, but is meant to be experienced at the deepest level of one's being. Prior to Shankara, it was Gaudapada, the grand teacher of Shankara, who had to a great extent laid the foundation, in his *Karika* on the *Mandukya Upanishad,* of the basic theorems upon which Shankara would built the entire superstructure of Advaita Vedanta. Shankara, through his sharp mind and penetrating intellect, gave a proper philosophic shape to the spiritual intuitions that were contained in the *shruti-texts,* the Upanishads, and the *Brahmasutra,* which ultimately crystallised in what has come to be known as Advaita Vedanta, or the School of Vedanta which upholds the vison of unity concerning Reality. This vision, when translated into a theological conceptual framework, denotes that *brahman-atman* is identical, and whatever diversity or manifoldness is experienced at the empirical level is completely false. This empirical diversity may have an epistemic significance in so far as the daily affairs of life are concerned, but has no ontic validity or significance because diversity comes to be on account of thought. Whether one agrees or disagrees with Shankara's philosophic vision, what cannot be denied is that "his philosophy," in the words of Radhakrishnan, "stands forth complete, needing neither a before nor an after.." (*Indian Philosophy,* II, pp. 446-47).

As to when Shankara lived is a matter of conjuncture, and mostly scholars are of the view that either he lived during the seventh or the eighth centuries of our era. Whatever be the date of his worldly life, what cannot be denied is the fact that he, during his short span of life, not only revolutionised Indian philosophic thought, but equally revived Hinduism from the deep slumber to which it had succumbed. He is said to have been born at Kaladi, which is in Kerala, in a Nambudari Brahmana family. He is also believed to have left his mortal ody at Kedarnath, which is in the Himalaya, when he was barely thirty-two ears old. During this short span of his worldly life, Shankara achieved the impossible and incredible intellectual feat by writing commentaries *(bhashys)* on the major leven Upanishads, on the *Brahmasutra* and n the *Bhagvadgita.* In these commentaries hankara presents his philosophic vision, which is that of non-dualism *(advaita),* in a ystematic manner by pointing out the logical deficiencies of various schools of hought, whether Vedic or non-Vedic. In addition to these commentaries, he also wrote many secondary texts *(prakarana-grantha)* or those who could not grasp the etaphysical subtlety of Advaita. Shankara was not only an intellectual giant, but also saint *par excellence,* and this aspect of his fe we come across from the devotional ymns he wrote. It will not be out of place assert that Shankara was not only an outstanding intellectual and a saint, but also a ractical man who, while travelling the ngth and breadth of the country, made an tempt at organising Hinduism by reviving s monasticism and learning. Accordingly e showed his pragmatism by establishing e four monastic centers of Joshi-math in e north, Shringeri-math in the south, Puri-math in the east, and Dvaraka-math in the est. Since their inception, these monastic nters have been carrying out their assigned sk, which is to practise and cultivate the onastic spirituality as well as propagate the non-dualistic vision that is contained in the *shruti*-texts. In doing so, these centers have thereby been able to preserve the historical continuity that is constitutive of what is known as Hinduism.

In order to give a practical, consistent and logical form to the metaphysical vision of Advaita Vedanta, Shankara had to carry out certain intellectual tasks, which he set out to accomplish in the Introduction to his commentary on the *Brahmasutra.* The tasks that he needed to perform, even before giving proper shape to the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta, was to examine critically the various systems of thought, both orthodox and heterodox, that were masquerading as being complete and fit as vehicles of salvation. Upon examining them, Shankara found them to be opposing not only the seminal ideas of the *shruti*-texts, but also contradicting the very structure of logical thought. It, thus, fell upon Shankara to point out, through the use of reason *(yukti),* as to why these various schools of thought are deficient both spiritually and intellectually. The challenge that Shankara had to face was from the Buddhists as well as from such schools of thought which adhered to the philosophy of realism.

It is the fundamental contention of the Buddhists, no matter to what school of thought they may belong to, that whatever there is in the phenomenal world, it is impermanent on account of insubstantiality. What this assertion amounts to saying concerning the individuals as well as the world is this: there is no permanent stuff or substratum which could be treated as the ground of that which changes. This empirical analysis concerning the existent entities in the world goes against the spirit of the Upanishads which emphatically adhere to the metaphysical standpoint of a permanent Self *(atman),* which is seen as the basis of that which changes, while itself remaining indivisible. This doctrine of impermanence *(anitya)* as well as of not-self *(anatman)* gave rise to the theory of momentariness *(ksna-vada),* which says that every entity, while coming into being, immediately passes away, and thereby persists *(sthiti)* only for a moment *(ksna).* For the Hinayana this understanding of momentariness was mainly applied to what is phenomenal, and so did not concern themselves with the Transcendent. The Mahayanists, however, were absolutists, and so spoke of Reality as being non-dual. But this Absolute for the Madhyamakas is nothing but the *shunya,* and for the Vijnanavadins it is consciousness, which however is said to be momentary. It is against these views of the Buddhists that Shankara waged his battle by pointing out as to how nihilism, implicitly and explicitly, is ingrained in them. So Shankara spoke of them as being the adherents of the theory of destruction *(vinasa-vadin),* because for them everything ends in destruction. For the Buddhists it is not Being which is real, rather it Becoming which is seen to be the sole reality.

In addition to the Buddhists, Shankara had to fight the inconsistent theories of realism, which adhered to the notion that there is more than one real, and so accordingly supported, in one form or the other, philosophical dualism as well as theological difference between God and man. The main followers of realism, and thereby of pluralism, were such schools of thought as the Nyaya, Vaishesika and the Samkhya. Upholding that there are more than one real, they thereby spoke of the transcendent and the phenomenal as being dialectically opposed, as both of them were characterised by opposite natures. This dualism of realism was unacceptable to Shankara, and so had to criticise them severally. It cannot, however, be denied that Shankara adopted some seminal ideas of the Samkhya system, yet he had to point out the deficiencies the School suffered from. Moreover, these realistic schools thought that the external entities exist independently of consciousness, which means that their ontic reality continues to be in the absence of being perceived. It is not their cognition which makes them to exist; rather they exist independently of it. This view of the realists had to be criticised, which Shankara did in the context of illusion.

In addition to these schools of realism, Shankara also had to counter the views of the Mimamsa school, which, being realist in orientation, interpreted the Vedic texts, particularly the ones that deal with ritual, in such a manner as would lead one to believe that main purpose of the *Shruti* is not soteriological, but only ritual action. And the ritual itself was interpreted in terms of a causality which, both in intention and conention, was realistic. This view of the *shruti* meant that only such portion should be given primary importance which concerns itself with ritual action, whereas such texts which are soteric, and thereby speak of transcendental knowledge, should be treated as being of secondary importance. Shankara rejects this contention of the Mimamsikas concerning the Vedic texts. According to him, the aim and purpose of the revealed texts is soteric, which is, on the one hand is to disclose that which is Real *(brahman)*, and, on the other, lead the individual being, through the knowledge of the Real, to the soteriological goal of liberation which is characterised by the cognition of unity. It means that primary purpose of the *shruti* is knowledge *(jnana)* and not ritual action *(karman)*. In this way Shankara gave a new and original hermeneutical method in terms of which the Vedic texts could be interpreted.

Also Shankara had to counter the views of some commentators like Bharttriprapanca, who, prior to Shankara, had interpreted the Upanishada and the *Brahmasutra* in such a manner as would result in upholding the view that *brahman*, while causing the world to be, transforms himself into the phenomena. It is a Samkhya theory of causation which says that the effect, prior to its actualisation, exists potentially in the cause, and is accordingly known as the theory of *satkaryavada*. The theory is based upon the analogy of milk and curd. The curd, prior to becoming curd, exists potentially in the milk, or should we say that it is milk which transforms *(perinama)* itself into curd. If this thesis is accepted with regard to *brahman*, who is said to be sole Reality, it would mean that *brahman* suffers from change, and so cannot be said to indivisible or constant. Change also mean division within *brahman*, and if division and change is the nature of *brahman*, then we cannot at all speak of it as being Real. Thus Shankara had to counter these Samkhyan views of causality, particularly when applied to *brahman*. In order to maintain the absolute purity and non-duality of *brahman*, Shankara propounded the theory of transcendental illusion *(mayavada)* in terms of which the phenomenal categories of existence are seen as being the products of *maya*. On account of transcendental illusion or ignorance *(avidya)*, the world, which is ontically unreal but epistemically as real as an illusion, is being superimposed *(adhyasa)* upon the Real, which is *brahman*. Consequently we think of the world as real because we, on account of ignorance, impute the attributes of the Real upon the unreal.

Shankara's theory of illusion *(mayavada)* is also known as the theory of appearance *(vivarta-vada)* on account of the fact that the illusory object appears to be real unless it is negated by right knowledge. That which appears to be real is not ontically real because it is the product of ignorance. The world, which appears to be real, is apparent because it is the product of *maya.* Were it to be real, then it would suffer neither from change nor from the multiplicity of division, because Reality *a priori* is said to be indivisible and constant. Having shown the world of appearance as being illusory on the analogy of cognition that is illusory, Shankara thereby attempts to analyze as to why the epistemically illusory objects are ontically as unreal, and not non-existent, as are the dream objects. In this manner Shankara protects the non-dual nature of Reality by discarding the pluralistic realism, which believes in the plurality of reals, as well as the theory of causation, which, on the analogy of milk and curd, believes that *brahman* actually transforms itself into the categories that are constitutive of phenomena.

Shankara also had to counter the critique of those who maintained that the apophatic view (neti, neti) of the Upanishads concerning Reality terminates in anihilism that Buddhism advocates, Shankara had to point out that the in determinate nature of brahman is not the same which the doctrine of emptiness *(shunyata,* or *shunyavada)* of Nagarjuna denotes. When brahman is spoken as being indeterminate, the purpose is to cancel that which is determinate, and determinate is that which is space-time bound. That which is space-time bound must necessarily be or product of *maya,* and so accordingly the product of ignorance. It is upon the negation of that which is limited that the infinite, which is *brahman,* can be realised. Thus the critique of the opponents concerning the Upanishadic apophatism is misplaced and unjustified.

It is upon settling these contentious philosophic issues, which have a direct bearing upon the Vedantic non-dualism, that Shankara engaged himself in the task of explaining as to what constitutes the essence of Advaita Vedanta in terms of theory and praxis. Shankara, makes it quite explicit and evident, before detailing the doctrines of Advaita, that the Upanishadic revelation must not be treated as an intellectual game of ideas; rather it must be seen as a spiritual discipline in terms of which soteric liberation is realised as consisting in the non-dual knowledge of Reality, which means that Reality, both subjectively and objectively, is experienced as being one and identical. Upon having made it clear and manifest that the Vedantic vision must be seen more as a spiritual discipline than an intellectual formulation of theories, although not discounting the importance of intellectual ideas. Shankara thereby tells us as to who is qualified to undertake the study of Vedanta. The one who is qualified *(adhikari)* to study the Vedantic text must, according to Shankara, be in possession of the following fourfold qualifications, which are (a) to have the ability of making a right and proper distinction between the real *(sat)* and the unreal *(asat),* which, in the theological language of Vedanta, means to have the capacity, both spiritual and intellectual, of differentiating the eternal from that which is non-eternal *(nitya-anitya-vastu-viveka);* (b) to have developed, through spiritual discipline, such a disposition of detachment and abandonment *(vairagya)* whereby the need for pleasureable experiences, which are basically sensuous in nature, is never felt; (c) to have developed such and inward inclination whereby; that alone is undertaken or cultivated which is morally right and which is in accordance with the injunctions and commands of *shastra,* and (d) to have an intense longing for soteric liberation *(mumuksutva).* In the one in whom these four qualifications are existing has the right claim to undertake the study of Vedanta, because it is such a person alone who, at the feet of his teacher *(guru),* can be the real hearer of the liberative Word *(verbum)* of the revelatory texts which the *guru* expounds. In this manner does Shankara make quite explicit that the Vedantic knowledge is soteric, and so must be seen as such. Also they alone will benefit from it whose inclination is more spiritual than intellectual. It is within this framework that Shankara begins to expound the Vedantic thought, and to know what Shankara has to say concerning Reality, it will be appropriate to begin with his theory of knowledge.

THE THEORY OF ERROR

Shankara's conception as to what constitutes error cannot be followed or understood apart from his famous theory of *maya (mayavada)* or transcendental illusion. This transcendental illusion is said to be identical with ignorance *(avidya)* on account of which we are unable to know the real from the unreal. It is in the very Introduction to his commentary on the *Brahmasutra* that Shankara frames the fundamental epistemic views concerning the nature of the transcendental and the empirical illusion, and how the former is the ground of the latter. It is within this epistemic framework that Shankara tells us that the individual's knowing process is characterised by two contrary elements or aspects, and without their existence no objective knowledge is possible. The two contrary elements that give rise to empirical knowledge are the subject and object. It is by putting one against the other that we come to know that which is out there. The subject is said to be of the nature of pure 'I', which is identical with the Self, and so is spoken of as pure consciousness or awareness *(chaitanya).* In contrast to the Self, we have the object, which is of the nature of non-I, and so is said to be characterised by materiality *(jada).* Although being of contrary natures, it is the subject who cognises the object as the 'other, and thereby knowledge is allowed to emerge. As far as their opposite natures are concerned, it is self-evident to the one who is perceptive and intellectually alert. Their contrariness is of the same nature which exists between light and darkness.

At this point it may be pointed out that Shankara contradicts himself in asserting that knowledge is given rise to when the two contraries, subject and object, relate to each other. Logically it is impossible to effect union between dis-similar natures. It is like saying that darkness and light can co-exist simultaneously without any hindrance. Experience tells us that dis-similars never co-exist, and in the presence of the one the other gets sublated. When there is, for example, light, darkness is sublated. If this be the case, then how can we assert that knowledge is given rise when the subject and object, which are dis-similars, relate to each other? Do we not, thus, contradict the very logical structure of thought?

Shankara is quite aware of these difficulties, and that is why, while concentrating upon the nature of illusion, he sets out to investigate as to how these two contraries, the subject and the object, relate to each other within the empirical epistemic framework. Shankara at the outset makes it quite clear that no empirical experience can be actualised or has the possibility of occurring unless these two contraries are not only present, but are allowed to relate to each other. If empirically it is impossible for these two terms to relate to each other, we will have to find a source which is other than empirical and which allows them to join together for the emergence of empirical knowledge. The source, according to Shankara, is nothing else but the transcendental illusion *(maya, avidya).* This *maya* is seem to be that inexpressible and indefinable power which allows the logically impossible union to occur between the subject and the object, and thereby facilitating the arising of empirical knowledge. Why is it so? It is the function of thought to categorise everything in terms of opposites, and whatever empirical knowledge we have, it is always derived through the method of contrast and exclusion. The categorising nature of thought is something which is *a priori* and must be seen as occurring on account of the transcendental illusion. As it is not possible for human thought to know what the Subject is in itself or the Object in itself, so the objective world, which is experienced as being out there, must have only one source, and that source is but *maya.*

* * *

(To be Continued)

You can best serve your nation, your Lord, your fellow-beings, and yourself by conscious self-culture, by living for the realisation of the Self. A nation's prestige depends upon the few such self-cultured sons and daughters of the land. When time has effaced the memory of all else, it would be the man-of-God who will ever be remembered. Therefore become a man-of-God here and now.

—Swami Sivananda

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THE BASIC FOUNDATION

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

The inventions of science, social philosophies, economic theories and political ideologies will lead mankind nowhere unless basic spiritual values are ingrained in them.

A Godless society cannot be free from dictatorial rule. A theocratic dictatorship is bad enough, and a police state, even though it might owe allegiance to the church, is as good as Godless, but still there is the hope of redemption, since God and freedom cannot be kept apart for long.

Materialistic criteria may help in the physical betterment of life, but man cannot live by bread alone; his emotional and spiritual needs are also equally important.

Suppression, tyranny and servitude are purgatorial experiences in the life of a nation, but in the womb of time stir freedom, enlightenment and liberalism.

Mere material gains and consolidation of resources will not give abiding peace or happiness to the people, if they are barren of moral and spiritual wealth.

World peace, world unity and world welfare can only thrive on the foundations of morality and spirituality.

The soul of culture is spirituality, Just as suavity alone is not culture, church-going does not necessarily make a man spiritual.

Spirituality cannot descend from the above; it cannot be enforced on the people by the head of a state; it cannot be ensured by an act of any Parliament. The people will have to raise themselves to spirituality.

* * *

THIS WAY, TO PEACE!

(SRI SWAMI VENKATESANANDA)

A homely parable contains a vital truth. An aged lady was frantically searching for something on the verandah of her house. A kind young man joined the search. When he found nothing there, he asked her:

"What are you searching for?"

"A sewing needle," replied the lady.

"It is not here: where did you drop it?"

"Inside the kitchen, where I was mending clothes."

"But, why do you search for it here?"

"Because it is dark inside the kitchen!"

This parable is a favourite with my master, Swami Sivananda. He points out that everyone shares the old lady's ignorant plight. Even the great leaders of the world suffer from this delusion. We lost our peace of mind within; we search for it in the outside world, because we are unable to look within.

We are all unhappy and we want to be happy. Asks Sri Krishna in the *Gita*: "Where is happiness for a man who has no peace at heart?" "Whoever you are, if you have no peace of mind, you can have no happiness," sings a great saint-composer of India, Tyagaraja.

THREE GATES TO HELL

What disturbs the peace of our mind? The Buddha proclaimed 2500 years ago: "It is desire." Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "He who has renounced all desires enjoys peace." Lust, anger and greed are styled by Krishna as the three gates to hell: hell not elsewhere, after our death in this world, but hell here and now. This hell around us here is not built of brick, mortar and cement, but by worldly desire, anger, hatred and greed.

A two-pronged attack on this great enemy of man—worldly desire—is taught in the *Gita*. The first is by inward communion with our own Self, or God within, who is an ocean of peace and bliss. When this conscious communion with this inner Self is established by means of concentration and meditation, when the mind has learnt to enjoy that inner peace and happiness, any desire which may arise in the mind, during the course of the daily life, will naturally "flow" inward and find its fulfilment in the Self. The desire which arises in the mind by force of past habit, will not clamour for satisfaction, but will be dissolved in the inner Self.

DUTY FIRST

Secondly, in our relationship with the external world, we are asked to be mindful of our duties and to let our rights and privileges take care of themselves. My master declares that it is because man has forgotten this and he clamours for his rights and privileges, without caring to perform his duties efficiently and in the right spirit, there is disharmony everywhere.

Sri Krishna commands us in the *Gita* that we should do our duty, without profit-motive. Thus the external manifestation of desire, as profit-motive, is also curbed. This two-pronged attack starves this insatiable demon, desire. He lurks in the corners of our heart, till God is realised, till our immortal, all-blissful Self is realised as actual immediate experience. Then desire dies. Supreme peace, which is our essential nature, then remains untainted by desire and consequent disharmony.

May there be peace on earth.

(Courtesy: Radio Ceylon)

* * *

Prayer generates good spiritual currents and produces tranquillity of the mind. If you pray regularly, your life will be gradually changed and moulded.

—**Swami Sivananda**

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IN MEMORIAM OF REVERED KRISHNAPRIYANANDA MATAJI

Our dear and revered Krishnapriya Mataji is no more. She left her body on October 7th 1998 at about 9 a.m. But she continues to live in our hearts. Slowly the image of the suffering Mataji is fading, and our Mataji is with us, as we always knew her. We see her walking with her Kamandalu, taking bath in the Ganga, sitting and meditating on the rock (which we call krishnapriya Mataji's rock) or on the steps of Gurudev's Kutir, a true Guru-Sharan-Ashraya. We see her working in her beloved garden and worshipping in the temples, doing Paduka Pooja, because she was a Guru-Bhakti-Ratna and a Guru-Sharan-Ashrita. We meet her on her morning walks and visit her in the library.

She was born in Kerala in a very good and wealthy family, but when Gurudev's call came, she gave up everything and became one of the simplest and most austere Sadhaks of the Ashram, a Tapas-Priya, a Titikshu. She had very few possessions, her door was always unlocked, she did all the cleaning herself, not only of her room and the common verandah but also of the library. The library was really her creation, she built it up and knew every single book. She gave advice and introduced people to books and authors. And she also gave the best of herself and gently led faithful visitors and devotees to feel that they were not visitors, but members of Gurudev's large family. Many knew her for a whole lifetime and say: "She has been like a mother to me!" Those who had the good fortune to accompany her on her annual journey to Badrinath or could go with her to see Maa Anandamayee Maa or Harihara Tirtha Maharaj in Kailash Ashram had a very special experience. Those who went with her on a walk, came back rich with the knowledge she shared on subjects like "total self-surrender at the feet of the Guru" or "accepting life as it is". She was quiet, affectionate and caring. Her love for her only son reminded one of "Ya Devi Sarva Bhuteshu Matrurupena Samsthita" ("to the Devi who abides in all beings in the form of mother").

As a Sadhak she was a very remarkable personality, an example to all of us. She was contented, cheerful and dispassionate; she was courageous, highly determined and disciplined; and she was dedicated and dignified. This brought her to loving admiration and deep appreciation of all Ashramites and visitors. True to Gurudev's teachings she started the day with God at 2.30 a.m. with her own Sadhana, and after that she joined the morning Sadhana of Swami Vidyanandaji Maharaj for more than 40 years. She played the Veena beautiful and knew all the Stotras by heart. She filled the day with God through selfless service in the Ashram library, by Svadhyaya and reading of scriptures in the Matri Satsanga and deep meditation at the banks of the Ganga, and she closed the day with God by attending the evening Satsang. She had discrimination, intense renunciation and great endurance. She was full of self-awareness, mental alertness and constant God-remembrance till the last moment. Her day was full, and yet she had time, thanks to her punctuality and discipline.

Think of punctuality, regularity and humility - she is there.
Think of austerity, purity and divinity - she is there.
Think of simplicity, sincerity and magnanimity - she is there.

That is why Gurudev looked after her needs till the very end. He sent the best nurses and medical aid to take care of her. There was always somebody to read the Bhagavad Geeta, Lalita Sahasranama and Vishnu Sahasranama with her or for her. There were many who did everything for her. She, who rather served than was served, now "invoked" this loving and dedicated service during her last weeks. And her spiritual discipline and strength helped her to bear her suffering with great patience, courage and dignity. When Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj came to see her on the 3rd of October, he sang for her a song by Avadhootendra Sarasvati, "In my life and also in my death Radhakrishna is my sole refuge". And he prayed "that this will come to be true and an actual fact of your experience, 100%! And may Krishna and Gurudev, both of them, be before you, not in a mental vision but as an actual vision!" With her last strength she fell at his feet, he put his hand on her head, blessed her and promised her that "whether this body is in front of you or not, Chidananda will always be with you". What took place in her heart, we do not know. We can only tell that throughout the last night, for more than twelve hours, "Om Namo Narayanaya" was chanted without a break, and she passed away peacefully on a morning full of light. May her soul rest in peace supreme and everlasting bliss. Hari Om Tat Sat.

P.S. Gurudev also fulfilled a wish of ours. We very much wanted to have a special picture of Mataji for the library, yet she was adamant. But one morning at the end of August the person with the camera came to the library, and there was Mataji, sitting at the desk as usual! All of a sudden someone she knew and loved came in to greet her and her whole being lit up in sweet delight. "Click" went the camera, and the beautiful memorial photograph was taken.

Matri Satsang

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IN MEMORIAM

(Dr. Sri Sivananda Adhvaryoo)

Dr. Bhanushankar Adhvaryoo (also known as Swami Yajnavalkyananda) a venerable senior disciple of Gurudev and one of the foremost propagators of Gurudev's Divine Life message in Gujarat—Saurashtra, attained to the Feet of God Almighty at 7-20 p.m. on the 22nd October, 1998. He passed away due to a massive heart-attack, within a matter of less than an hour after he had been admitted into the I.C.C. unit at the Sivananda Ashram's hospital, D.L.S. Headquarters, on the bank of sacred Ganga. He was 93 years of age at the time of his death, but his mental and intellectual faculties were as keen as ever. He was well-known throughout Gujarat for his great compassion and utter selflessness.

In Gujarat, this venerable Doctor Swami is adored as 'Bapuji', an honoured and loving name by which everyone adored him. He had transformed the whole of Gujarat and many other places into his Service Centre where he did indefatigable service, tireless and most enthusiastic. The Doctor Swamiji did not expect any invitation but would himself chalk out areas needing expert aid, where he conducted thousands of Eye Surgery operations, all free, accepting no fee from any patient. He would himself make arrangements at different places for conducting eye relief camps and surprisingly every operation was successful. After the operation, he himself would arrange for post-operational treatment through his own staff and provide spectacles free of charge to every operated patient.

Originally, he was a Government medical officer in Saidhpur-Patan, Gujarat and thereafter, he was invited to come and establish his own Hospital at Virnagar, about 40 Kilometres from Rajkot, on the Rajkot-Bhavnagar Road. With great energy, he expanded the Hospital to an enormous extent through his dedicated work and through donations which poured forth from well-wishers who recognised an unmistakable Divine Will operating through this Doctor. It was during a pilgrimage to holy Badrinath that he met Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj at the holy Ashram here at Rishikesh. Miraculously, his visit to Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj proved the turning point in his life and medical career. It became transformed into a spiritual Karma-yajna. He became a disciple of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, through an unexpected transformation of himself too, and thereafter, everything for him was Sri Swami Sivananda and all his work became Guru Seva and service of God. Everything that he did for the welfare of people, he associated with the name of Sri Swami Sivananda. Later on, after some years, he designated his organisation as 'Sivananda Mission', 'Sivananda Parivar', etc.

His love for the Ashram of Sri Gurudev is indescribable. The Swamijis from the Sivananda Ashram he welcomed to his place as though gods themselves have come. Such was the veneration he had for the Swamijis of the Ashram whenever they went to Virnagar for any reason. During the Birthdays of Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, President of The Divine Life Society, he used to conduct beautiful programmes, with Poor Feeding, Cultural Programmes, etc., in the night. When Sri Swami Krishnanandaji from the Ashram went there once, he was received with such affection that he allotted a special car, a driver and a cook personally, to see that the Swamiji from the Ashram had no inconvenience of any kind in freely visiting wherever he wished to go and an exceptional love was poured on him. We do not know whether he treated us as his Gurubhais or as our loving father or grandfather. Without doubt, Late Dr. Adhvaryooji Maharaj was himself an embodiment of love, service and compassion. Verily, the lines of H.W. Longfellow apply to this great soul:—

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

May the departed spirit of this great soul repose in the eternal Peace of the Divine and be blessed by the Lord Almighty with everlasting Life! We close the In Memoriam with this above prayer. Om Shanti!

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PARABLE OF THE BRAHMIN WHO ESCAPED RAIN

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

An Old Brahmin was walking along the road when it began to rain heavily. He had no umbrella. He was afraid of catching cold. There was no place to take shelter, too. He saw at a distance two coolies carrying a wooden cot. He ran forward. He was shorter than the coolies. He went between the two coolies, with the wide cot over his head. Not a drop of rain fell on his head. Occasionally he also helped the coolies a little; but the advantage to him was very much more than the labour.

Many Sadhakas expose themselves to the severe rain of worldly temptations, while they are walking towards the destination—God-realisation. The wise ones, discover an intelligent way of escaping the evil effects of these temptations. They find that there exist very near them Ashrams and spiritual institutions managed by spiritually "taller" souls, more advanced Sadhakas and saints. By joining such Ashrams and institutions, they escape the temptations and trials. The advanced souls carry a protective shield underneath which the lesser souls take refuge and thus avoid getting lost. These aspirants also contribute a little to the institutions: but eventually the advantage they derive is something very great, in comparison to the work they contribute. Such is the glory of spiritual institutions.

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सनत्सुजातीयम्

श्री सनत्सुजात उवाच

निष्कल्मषं तपस्त्वेतत् केवलं परिचक्षते ।
एतत्समृद्धमत्यर्थं तपो भवति नान्यथा ॥

Nishkalmasham tapastvetat kevalam parichakshate,
Yetatsamriddhamatyartham tapo bhavati na'nyatha.

Sri Sanatsujata replied :

Tapas which does not have any defects is said to be Kevala, pure. It is this which yields abundant fruit and not any other kind of Tapas.

—*Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, ii-12*

VAIRAGYA

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

There is a way to the immortal abode. There is a way to supreme happiness. There is a way to the fourth dimension. That way is Vairagya. Follow the way. Follow the way.

Vairagya is dispassion, desirelessness, or non-attachment. It is indifference to sensual objects herein and hereafter. It is born of and sustained by right discrimination or Sadviveka.

Vairagya is the opposite of Raga or attachment. Raga binds a man to Samsara; Vairagya liberates a man from bondage.

Vairagya thins out the fatty sensual mind. It turns the mind inward. Vairagya is the most important qualification for a spiritual aspirant. Without it, no spiritual life is possible.

THE PULL OF RAGA-DVESHA

The two currents of the mind—attraction and repulsion—really constitute the world of Samsara. A worldly man is a slave of these two mighty currents. He is tossed about hither and thither like a piece of straw. He smiles when he gets pleasure; he weeps when he gets pain. He clings to pleasant objects; he runs away from objects that cause pain.

Wherever there is sensation of pleasure, the mind gets glued, as it were, to the object that gives pleasure. This is what is called attachment. This only brings bondage and pain. When the object is either withdrawn or when it perishes, the mind gets unspeakable pain. Attraction is the root-cause for human sufferings.

A dispassionate man has a different training. He has a different experience altogether. He is a pastmaster in the art or science of separating himself from the impermanent, perishable objects. He has absolutely no attraction for them. He constantly dwells in the Eternal. He stands adamantine as a peak amidst a turbulent storm, as a spectator of this wonderful world-show.

A dispassionate man has no attraction for pleasant objects and no repulsion for painful ones. Nor is he afraid of pain. He knows well that pain helps quite a lot in his progress and evolution, in his journey towards the goal. He stands convinced that pain is the best teacher in the world.

HOW TO CULTIVATE VAIRAGYA

Vairagya comes through looking into the defects of sensual life. Look into the defects of sensual life or sensual pleasure. You will develop dispassion.

When you are not impressed with rich living, rich style of living cannot attract you. When you are impressed with the idea that meat and wine are not at all pleasurable, meat and wine cannot tempt you. When you are impressed that a woman is nothing but a leather-bag of pus, urine, bones, and flesh, woman cannot tempt you. In that case, if you fail to get meat or wine or woman, or to have a rich living, you will not be agonised at all in your mind.

Aspirants should study Bhartrihari's *Vairagya Satakam* and other works on Vairagya. These will increase your desire for liberation and your conviction in spiritual life. Sri Rama describes the disastrous effects of lust, wealth, the miseries of birth, and infancy. A beautiful description is given in the Vairagya Prakarana of the Yoga-Vasishtha. Everyone should read it. This will induce Vairagya in the mind.

DEGREES IN VAIRAGYA

There are different degrees in Vairagya. Supreme dispassion or Para Vairagya comes after one attains Self-realisation. The whole world then looks like a straw. The Vairagya becomes perfectly habitual. That is intense spiritual strength. That is Para Vairagya.

Temporary fleeting dispassion is not Vairagya. It will not help the aspirant in the attainment of Self-realisation. It is common to have dispassion for some particular objects, by some cause or the other. But, it is only by having dispassion for all objects at all times that one will get Knowledge of the Self.

Intense Vairagya only will help the aspirant to stick to the spiritual path. Karana Vairagya born of disappointment, loss, death of relatives, will leave you at any moment. It will be waiting for chances to seize again the objects that were once renounced. It will evaporate quickly like ether, chloroform, or ammonia.

But the Vairagya that is born of Viveka is enduring and everlasting. It will not fail the aspirant at any time like the Vairagya that comes temporarily when a lady gives birth to a child or when a man attends a funeral in the crematorium.

Real Vairagya should come from enquiry, Vichara. All these objects do not give us lasting happiness. They lead us into pain and sorrow. Such deep enquiry, again and again persisted in for a very long time, produces lasting Vairagya. It is the real wealth for an aspirant. It helps him to do real Sadhana. It makes the mind introvert. This Vairagya puts a break to the extrovert tendency of the mind. Even if the mind runs towards objects, at once it will point out that there is pain there, that sensual enjoyment is the cause for rebirth and intense suffering. So the mind is terribly afraid, and gradually, through intense practice, it is established in real, lasting, sustained, intense Vairagya.

The mind should gradually be weaned off its old habits and cravings. If you cut off all at once its pleasure-centres, it will get puzzled. You should slowly train the mind in meditation and make it taste the inner bliss. Gradually, it will leave off its old habits and old cravings, and you can get yourself established in true Vairagya

VAIRAGYA—A MENTAL STATE

Vairagya does not mean abandoning social duties and the responsibilities of life. It does not mean detachment from the world. It does not mean a life in the solitary caves of the Himalayas or in the crematorium. It does not mean living on neem-leaves, cow's urine and dung. It does not mean wearing of matted hair and having a Kamandalu made of gourd or coconut-shell in the hand. It does not mean shaving of head and throwing off clothes. Vairagya is mental detachment from all connections of the world.

A man may remain in the world, and discharge all the duties of his order and stage of life with detachment. He may be a householder. What if? He may live with family and children. But at the same time, he may have perfect mental detachment from everything. He can do his spiritual Sadhana. That man who has perfect mental detachment while remaining in the world is a hero, indeed. He is much better than the Sadhu living in the cave of the Himalayas, because the former has to face innumerable temptations at every moment of his life.

Wherever a man may go, he carries with him his fickle, restless mind, his Vasanas and Samskaras. Even if he lives in solitude in the Himalayas, still he is the same worldly man if he is engaged in building castles in the air and in thinking of the objects of the world. In that case, even the cave becomes a big city for him. If the mind remains quiet, if it is free from attachments, one can be a perfect Vairagi even while living in a mansion in the busiest part of a city like Calcutta. Such a mansion will be converted into a dense forest by him. Vairagya is purely a mental state.

Generally, aspirants say, "I have given up shirt"; "I have given up sweater"; "I have given up shoes"; "I live only on bread and Dhal." Their whole Sadhana consists in 'giving up'—give up this, give up that. Real spiritual life does not involve any giving up or taking. The only thing is you should not give leniency to the mind. If you are very hungry in the morning, take one or two *Iddlies* and a small cup of milk. But do not give leniency to the mind. It will hurl you down. Always be watchful. Be eternally vigilant.

Some Sannyasins practise Vairàgya in order to get Pratishtha or fame and respect. Some Sannyasins, working for the public good, make resolves: "We will not travel in trains. We will walk only. We will not take milk, fruits, etc. We will not use fountain-pens or watch." These are not desirable resolves. This is not the real nature of Vairagya. This is another kind of defect.

Attachment to Vairagya is as much an evil as attachment itself. These Sannyasins want to do service. If they move in cars or trains, if they keep the body strong and healthy, they can do more service in a short space of time. Those who do much writing work can turn out much work if they use a fountain-pen. Foolishness assumes various forms. This is one kind. It does not leave even educated persons or cultured Sannyasins.

You should have extreme or Teevra Vairagya internally, and at the same time, follow the middle path externally.

Vairagya is a means for attaining Wisdom of the Self. It is not the goal Itself. A Jivanmukta or realised sage has neither Raga nor Vairagya. If you give him a little dry bread alone, he is quite satisfied. He will not grumble. If you give him the best sweetmeats, milk and fruits, he will not refuse, but he will not be elated by good food. He has equanimity of mind. He is above likes and dislikes. He always takes delight in his own Self only, but not in external objects.

MAHA-TYAGI AND MAHA-BHOGI

He who is endowed with equanimity of mind towards objects is called a Maha-Tyagi and Maha-Bhogi in the Yoga-Vasishtha. It is easy to practise Vairagya, but it is extremely difficult to keep the evenness of mind.

Sukadeva was tested by Raja Janaka. He was made to remain without food at the gate for some days. He was quite peaceful. Then he was taken to the harem. Ranis served him and gave him best food. He remained unaffected. This is wisdom.

Young aspirants should be very careful and cautious. They should not take advantage of the liberty of a Maha-Tyagi and Maha-Bhogi. This can be practised only by an advanced Yogin who has got equal vision over all beings. Beginners should stick to their resolves of truth, Ahimsa, Brahmacharya, and Vairagya to the very letter and spirit.

Do not imitate Jivanmuktas. You are still a Sadhaka. Vasishtha had a wife, but he was a born Siddha. Janaka ruled a kingdom after severe Tapas and realisation of the Truth. Krishna lived a princely life, but He was one with the Infinite. You are not expected to behave like them. You must do Sadhana. You must have Abhyasa and Vairagya.

* * *

WHAT IS YOGA

Yoga does not consist in sitting cross-legged for six hours or stopping the pulse or beatings of the heart or getting oneself buried underneath the ground for a week or a month. These are physical feats only. Many people think that there is nothing beyond this in the path of Yoga. Real Yoga is something more and something higher. Real Yoga is the attainment of the highest divine knowledge through 'Nirvikalpa Samadhi', or conscious communion with the Lord by controlling the Indriyas (senses) and the mind.

Yoga is not something that is completely divorced from daily life. On the contrary, Yoga and daily life must be made to merge into each other. The ideal is to remember God constantly. The method is this, after each hour of work or other activity, close your eyes for a few seconds at least and think intensely of God, the all-pervading spirit. You will derive immense strength and peace.

—Swami Sivananda

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HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS

(SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA)

A Hindi *bhajan* says: "Listen, O man, I am by your side. As long as you keep searching for Me, you will never find Me, because I am not somewhere for you to search and to find. Until and unless you practise My presence, all your search is in vain. You put Me far away, while the fact is that there is nothing more immediate, more close, more near to you than Me. You search as though I am not where you are, and thus you reject My presence."

Rejecting the presence of God is the root of all unrighteousness. Rejecting the presence of God is the root of all deviation from *dharma*. Rejecting the presence of God is the main cause of our remaining bound to an unspiritual and undivine state. Rejecting the presence of God means rejecting the truth that Lord Krishna uttered for yours and mine and everyone's benefit for all times: "*ahamatma gudakesa sarvabhutasayasthitah; aham adischa madhyam cha bhutanam anta eva cha* (I am the Self, O Arjuna, seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings)." What more can the Divine say to man to make him aware of this one universal truth, one universal fact?

How many of you here, sitting and listening to these words of this servant of Gurudev, try to practise this truth? How many try to practise this fact, live in this fact, trying everyday from morning till evening to cultivate awareness—and base your thoughts, words and actions upon this fact, guided by the light of this awareness?

That is why our ancients said that remembrance of God is life, forgetfulness of God is death. Forgetfulness of God is spiritual death. Remembrance of God is to live spiritually. Remembrance of God is to live in *dharma*. *Dharma* departs the moment the awareness of God departs.

The basis of *dharma* is God. The basis of *dharma* is the reality of the Supreme Being. The basis of *dharma* is the truth of immediacy of God, the here-ness and the now-ness of God. Therefore if God is forgotten, *dharma* vanishes, it departs. If God is remembered, immediately *dharma* is there. You cannot separate *dharma* from God. You cannot separate God from *dharma*. You cannot separate your highest welfare and supreme good from God and *dharma*. *Dharma* and God constitute the one and only way of your highest good, your supreme blessedness, your eternal welfare.

No wonder, therefore, that the great teacher, upon whose advent our present calendar is based and whole holy and sacred birth we celebrate tonight, said: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." In saying this, He also indicated what your attitude should be towards *dharma*, towards righteousness, towards a good life of sublime character and good conduct.

Is it only an acceptance of it or even reverence for it? No. You must hunger for it. You must thirst after it—day by day, each moment, in each thought, word and deed. You must keenly and eagerly long to make your entire life righteousness oriented. You must long to make yourself an embodiment of *dharma*. You must hunger and thirst to make yourself a personification of righteousness, of *dharma*.

Then it is that your life will move in the direction of God-realisation. Your life will move towards God through the very living of your life in a *dharmic* and righteous manner. It is when you hunger and thirst, when you long and pant to make yourself perfectly thical, perfectly *dharmic*, to follow the traight and narrow path to the supreme goal, that God stretches out His hand, that ife becomes divine and the supreme attainment is assured.

There is no power on earth that can tand in your way if you are wedded to *harma*. There is no power in the universe hat can deprive you of the goal which you eserve. All obstacles will be overcome; all ifficulties will melt and pass away; all roblems will become solved. And if you and by *dharma*, *dharma* will stand by you, ever fail you. You need not move towards od. God will move towards you, come to ou.

Therefore, hunger and thirst after *dharma* in everything that you think, you feel, you do. Let the manner of your living be based upon *dharma*. Let your thought be righteous. Let your speech be righteous, truthful, honest, peace-giving, sweet. Let your entire life, day by day, shine with the radiance of *dharma*, the light of *dharma*.

This is the one thing needful. All saints, all sages, all prophets, all messengers of God have proclaimed this fact. *Dharma* is the supreme good. *Dharma* is the indispensable necessity. *Dharma* is your greatest treasure and friend, your well-wisher. *Dharma* is the greatest guarantee to ensure that your spiritual striving will not be in vain. It shall yield fruit, and that fruit shall be the fruit of immortality, everlasting life, everlasting bliss, everlasting peace.

This and much more *dharma* assures for one who supports it and lives it day by day. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." In this brief, very short saying, the Lord reveals to you the secret of attaining the Kingdom of God, and simultaneously indicates what your dynamic, vital attitude towards *dharma* should be. You must hunger for it, thirst for it, long for it. You must eagerly embrace *dharma* at every step each moment of your life. That is the secret of highest blessedness.

This, therefore, is the sharing of this servant this morning upon the eve of the birth of Divine Master Jesus. It is my way of preparing your minds to move towards the holy hour of nativity. Remember

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dharma. And you can remember *dharma* if you remember that you live, move and have your being in God, that your life is being lived in the presence of God. Therefore, in the presence of God, how can anything base or ignoble, petty or mean, profane or undivine ever be demonstrated?

Be aware of God—that He is now and here—and *dharma* will spontaneously be your way of life. Your life will spontaneously be the good life, the divine life. This is the truth.

Ponder this truth, accept *dharma* into your life with keen eagerness and full willingness, and live with awareness and alertness. Choose *dharma* for your life, and God will choose you to make His own. He will confer upon you highest blessedness!

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PARABLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL BARGAINER

After taking much toddy, a man went into a milk-stall and took some sweets and *Pan* (betel leaves). On coming out he extolled the quality of milk sold in that stall, and said in an impressive way, "I have had just now a cup of milk in that shop. See, it has refreshed me and has given me enough strength and energy to come and roar in front of you. You, too, go to that shop and taste that milk."

The *Pan* cannot prevent his mouth from giving out the toddy-smell. His actions were not steady and betrayed his state of intoxication. People readily understood that that man has taken not milk but toddy and that he spoke not for guiding others along the proper lines, but to earn a wage, to procure money, for fulfilling his cravings. Therefore, the public condemned him and shunned him.

The bargainer-cum-drunkard is like the religious hypocrite who goes about preaching religion to earn money to satisfy his lower desires. Such people trade upon the religious faith of the public.

These hypocrites first plan well. They go to some spiritual resort for a short stay, like the drunkard going to the milk-stall. They put on external marks to cover their lower nature, like the drunkard chewing *Pan*. They, then go about preaching, posing themselves for fully realised sage, and talk about the heavenly bliss that they are enjoying. They talk impressively, but the public do understand their lower nature and cravings. These false preachers are condemned and shunned from every quarter.

O man! your actions betray your thoughts. You cannot pose for that which you are not. Know this, and mould yourself. Become a true spiritual hero, and not a hypocrite.

—Swami Sivananda

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THE FOREST OF THE BRAHMA SUTRA*

(SRI SWAMI KRISHNANANDA)

The greatest truths available for human comprehension are supposed to be documented in the great scriptures called the Upanishads. They are exultations of masters who are deeply involved in the ultimate principles of the cosmos. They are realised souls, called **Rishis, but these Rishis in their** expressions through the Upanishads spoke in terms of their particular vision of Ultimate Reality.

A common student of the Upanishads is likely to feel embarrassed over apparently irreconcilable differences and contradictions among the statements of these great masters. Every kind of philosophy you will find in the Upanishads. There are provisions for establishing the monism aspect of philosophy, the dualistic aspect, the active aspect, the volitional aspect, everything can be found. Even Sankhya and Mimamsa have a reference.

What is it that you are supposed to take from this big forest of statements on the nature of Reality? To clarify the intention of these sages and to reconcile these statements in a harmonious manner, and to point out that different expressions do not necessarily mean contradictory presentations, Brahma Sutras was written. They can be harmonised by a higher perception of what is there and what is happening. In order to harmonise these multifaceted statements, Bhagavan Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa wrote a new text called the Brahma Sutras. Sutra is a thread that connects different parts of the vision of Truth.

All the statements connected with Ultimate Reality, known as Brahman in the Sanskrit language, have to be threaded together so that instead of the various statements of the Upanishads being contradictory outbursts, they become beautiful pearls in the garland of the knowledge of the Supreme Being, from various points of view. This act of reconciliation is called Samanvaya.

We have problems like this in the Gita also. What is it that the Gita is telling us? 'Go ahead and fight'; 'Think of Me always'; 'I am doing everything'—what is the point in saying all these things which seem to be negating one another?

When a Cosmic Perception enunciates a Truth, it may look like a multiple proclamation of different hues, colours and emphases, which an ordinary person will not be able to reconcile. You cannot know which is the correct vision and which is lesser or higher. To obviate these difficulties, the great master Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa wrote the

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An informal talk with residents in the Ashram.

wonderful interpretative textbook called the Brahma Sutras.

'What do you want?' is the first question. 'I want the ultimate Being, Brahman'. This is a terrific question, and a statement. Who is it that wants Brahman?

To avoid the quandary that may arise out of making a statement of this kind, the Sutra—the first one—avoids 'who', 'why' and all that. It simply makes an impersonal statement that Brahman should be known. Who should know It, it does not say, because if you ask such questions you will involve yourself in some kind of preliminary contradiction. Who are you to know Brahman? What right have you? So, avoiding such possible objections, the Brahma Sutra goes directly into the main theme, 'It has to be known'.

What is the meaning of 'knowing'? You know that there is a meeting here, I know that many people are sitting here, you know that I am speaking—this is a kind of knowledge, of course. Is it in this sense that you have to know Brahman? Or is there any other way?

The word 'Brahman' comes from a Sanskrit root, 'Brhm'—to expand, to be comprehensive, to include and be perfect. If the thing that is to be known you call Brahman is that which is inclusive and comprehensive, it must be including the knowing individual also. If the knowing person is outside this comprehensive Being, then that being would not be comprehensive, because it has excluded the knower or the person who aspires for it. So, it should include even the aspirant for it. Here is a knotty point before us.

If that which is to be known includes the knower of it also, then what is the answer to this question "Brahman is to be known?" Known by whom? It is already told that nobody is there to know it. Yet at the very beginning itself is a statement, 'It has to be known'. Is Brahman knowing Itself? Brahman is to be known—'Athato Brahma Jijnasa'—when thus it is said, does it mean that Brahman is wanting to know Itself? What for is this book which is to be read by people when only Brahman can know Itself and no one else can know It? That is to say, there is no passage to It with which you can be acquainted.

We are all in the world of dualistic perception. We are here seeing something and there is something else which we are seeing. This is how we feel in this world. We cannot even use the word 'world', unless it is seen and confronted by us because worldly perception which needs a duality, a dichotomy between the seer and the seen, which is the world, creates another difficulty regarding the way in which we can bring together the seer and the seen. The seer is not the seen, the seen is not the seer, is something very clear. You are not the world that is seen and the world which is seen is not yourself.

Such being the case, how would you bring together in a state of harmony the seer and the seen? Who is to work out this mystery? This deep analytical process which will stun the mind of any person and debar anyone from even approaching it; this wonderful self-identical means of knowing Brahman is called 'Jnana', which cannot be translated into English language easily. People say 'Jnana' means knowledge, wisdom, but they are all inadequate expressions of the operation that is taking place when Brahman is known.

You will be terrified at the very outset when feeling within yourselves the consequences that may follow from attempting to know a thing which can be known only by Itself. The meaning of this situation, if it has entered your mind, would explain to you what Knowledge is. It is not anything that you are thinking in your mind. It is not a degree qualification or a perceptual vision or empirical knowledge.

'Jnana' may frighten away anyone even while approaching it. It can throw you out. You cannot go near It, as it will happen if you go near a powerful magnetic field. It will kick you back; you cannot go near. It is considering this aspect of the nature of 'Jnana', that Bhagavan Sri Krishna mentions in the Gita—'this is a difficult path'.

'Klesodhikatarastesham Avyaktasaktachetasam
Avyakta hi gatirduhkham Dehavadbhiravapyate"
(BG XII.5)

Body-consciousness is the obstacle to understanding what all this means. Body-consciousness is just individual consciousness, affirmation of this particular individuality, the 'me'. It contradicts that which is inclusive and is complete and is itself, as it were. Brahman is also called Bhuma, the All-comprehensive Absolute, Plenum, including everything. Those who are located in one body only,—ego—are far from this Fullness.

Again the fear strikes us: Including everything? Including me also? 'Oh! This is not for me, this is not for me!' Everyone will say 'this is not for me', 'I will not go near It!'. Brahma-Sutrakara Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa knows all these problems, that people will be turned away by the thought, the very thought of the question regarding Brahman.

The Upanishads define Brahman. Let us see again what kind of thing It is. What kind of thing is Brahman? Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam. This is what the Taittiriya declares regarding Brahman.

"Satyam Jnanamanantam Brahma. Yo veda
nihitam guhayam
Parame Vyoman. Soshnute sarvan kaman saha
Brahmana Vipashchiteti"

One sentence, this particular declaration in the beginning of the Second Chapter of the Taittiriya Upanishad can make you so happy, thrill you to the brim, if only you could sense what depth of meaning this sentence contains. The moment you know Brahman, the whole Universe of Bliss enters into you and simultaneously you enjoy the whole universe; 'Saha Brahmana Vipashchita'.

You can enjoy so many things in this world. You can eat, you can go on a tour, you can read books, you can go to a drama or a cinema, you can dance—there are so many varieties of enjoyment; but when one enjoyment is taking place, another cannot come. They are all different things. So, successively we are enjoying different things in the world, but not all things at one stroke. Here is the difference.

The joys of all kinds of pleasurable encounters, whatever the number of these be, innumerable, infinite ways of the enjoyment of things in the world—when they all get clubbed together into a melting pot of a single instantaneous expression of Oceanic Bliss—that will be your experience when you experience Brahman, perhaps.

You shudder even to think that such a Bliss is possible. Even the thought of such an unthinkable Bliss can cause terror and tremor in our body. We can be in a state of terror and tremor by seeing fearful things, but here we can have terror even by imagining the superb Absolute—Brahman, wherein Bliss is a simultaneous completeness.

All disturbing and distracting notions in the mind have to be obviated first before we try to plunge into the nature of Brahman that is to be known.

The Brahma Sutra makes a statement 'Brahman is to be known'. Commentators write pages after pages in explaining the meaning of one Sutra only, "Athato Brahma Jijnasa." Volumes have been written, commentaries have been written, and commentaries on commentaries, and a third commentary on the second and the first! Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Vallabhacharya, Nimbarkacharya, all wrote great commentaries on the Brahma Sutras.

Sankaracharya's commentary was commented on by Vachaspati Mishra in his exposition called 'Bhamati'. One of the disciples of Sankara, Padmapada, wrote another commentary. Another disciple of Sankara, Sureshwaracharya, wrote a third commentary, in his own way. They approached this subject from three viewpoints. Together they present three angles of vision of Sankara's commentary. Of these Sureshwaracharya treats the entire creation as a cosmic illusion, whose nature cannot be described by a person involved in that illusion. You cannot say Brahman creates the universe because Brahman is eternity, complete, indefinable, infinite, perfect existence par excellence. It has no necessity to create. The appearance of something being created is the result of a peculiar admixture of confusion cosmically called Maya, and individually Avidya.

Vachaspati Mishra's position is that your mind which is conditioned by what is known as Avidya or ignorance distorts correct perception and the world does not exist as it is; it appears to be existing according to the particular form of Avidya or ignorance in which you are involved.

Padmapadacharya is more realistic in his nature. He has written a commentary on the first four Sutras, called Panchapadika. Generally people follow the trend of Panchapadika only, with its great commentary called Vivarana.

Vedantacharyas and people who teach

Vedanta generally do not follow Bhamati's view or Sureshwaracharya's. Panchapadika's view is taken usually, with its commentary known as Vivarana. The whole text of Panchadasi written by Swami Vidyaranya follows the line of Panchapadika of Padmapada. What is its speciality? The objective world must be existing. You cannot simply say your mind is creating the world of trees and mountains and all that. Such fantastic statements should not be made. Supposing it is accepted that your mind is creating things by Avidya operation inside, then you have to agree that the trees in the forest are created by your mind; the cows and the pigs and the dogs that are moving in the streets—they are created by you only; the mountains, the sun and the moon and the stars are created by your mind. You cannot accept this view and you will be repelled by the very idea that your mind is creating the sun and the moon and the stars. You have to follow the dictum of the Upanishads that originally the creation was effected by a Cosmic Being and not by any individual human being. In the process of creation, man is a latecomer. There were the space-time manifestation, the five Mahabhutas—earth, water, fire, air and ether; then the plantation, trees etc. Man came later on. How can the late-comer, man, be regarded as the originator of the universe? An objective creator, Ishwara, is to be accepted and it is futile to say that the human mind created the universe. This is Padmapada's school of thought: 'Srishti-Drishti'—creation first, seeing afterwards.

One of the subjects or themes of philosophy which Brahma Sutra refutes vehemently is Sankhya, the duality of consciousness and matter, known as Purusha and Prakriti. We are usually prone to accept the Sankhya doctrine since we ourselves feel that consciousness is inside us and the world is outside. So, there is a duality. Then, what is wrong with Sankhya? Don't you believe that the world is material in its nature and you are conscious inside? This is what exactly the Sankhya doctrine proclaims. There are only two things in this universe, consciousness and matter.

What is the trouble with Sankhya, now? Why are you objecting to its doctrine? The problem is this. Consciousness can never become matter; matter cannot become consciousness. They are totally distinct things. If that is the case, how would consciousness know matter? How would consciousness come in contact with the material world, and know that it exists at all? Contact of dissimilar things is not possible. Only similar things will come in contact with each other. There is a complete disparity between consciousness and matter. Your capacity to be conscious is different in nature from the objects that you see in the form of the world. How could Sankhya explain this problem? Who brings consciousness and matter together? There is no answer. This is a great defect in Sankhya. For that, to save its own skin, the Sankhya says they can come in contact with each other in another way. How?

Suppose there is a pure crystal which is radiating light from all sides. You bring a red rose flower near this crystal. You will see the whole crystal is red because of the reflection of the rose flower in the crystal. You may say this is a form of contact of the rose flower with the crystal. Crystal may be compared to consciousness, rose flower to matter. Don't you agree that they have come in contact with each other? The fact that the crystal has not become the rose, but imagines that it is the rose, is the bondage of the crystal.

That the matter of the world outside cannot touch you and you are pure consciousness, and yet it appears as if the objects have entered your mind and tempt you and repel you, is the tragedy of the whole of life. This is one explanation the Sankhya gives. Two things do not really meet each other. They appear to meet so. If that is the case, bondage would be an appearance only. There will be no real bondage. Here again a contradiction in the Sankhya. If bondage is not real, then liberation also will not be real.

What is all this great effort of Sankhya to attain liberation? What is liberation? The freedom of the crystal from having any contact with the red flower—that is Moksha. That the red flower exists even when it is taken away, far away from the crystal so that the crystal does not appear any more red. Can you say that it is the freedom or the emancipation of the crystal? Now, what is emancipation? It is the establishment of oneself in oneself, the establishment of consciousness in consciousness. What is consciousness? The Sankhya establishes the truth that it is infinite in its nature. Consciousness cannot be divided into parts, something here, something there. Because even to imagine a sub-division in consciousness, consciousness has to be present in the division itself. So nobody can conceive a division of consciousness. That would be a self-contradiction. Then, in that case, when the infinite consciousness establishes itself in itself, as the crystal would remain pure and shining as it was, the question arises: 'where is the rose at that time'? As consciousness is infinite, it is omniscient, it knows everything, and there is no rose outside it!

If this state of omniscience of consciousness is Moksha as the Sankhya says, does that omniscient consciousness know that there is a rose flower outside it? The rose flower is only an example of matter, world, Prakriti. If due to the omniscience of consciousness, Purusha, it has to know everything, then it has to know Prakriti also, and even in emancipation it will come in contact with Prakriti. The bondage will be once again there. Prakriti is eternally existing according to Sankhya, it does not vanish in the liberation of a particular centre of consciousness. What does all this mean, then?

Vyasa, in the Sutras connected with this subject, refutes Sankhya philosophy vehemently and takes special pains to see that nobody gets contaminated by Sankhya dualism.

You should not imagine that Brahma Sutra is as simple as I am explaining! I have sugar-coated it and made it halwa-like. Otherwise, as it is, you will not go near it. It is a very long subject.

(To be Continued)

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THE NON-DUALISM OF SHANKARA

(SRI MOTI LAL PANDIT)

[Continued from the previous Issue]

As the source of that which is phenomenal is said to be cosmic or transcendental illusion, so it is logical to say that we embodied beings, being finite and phenomenal, too must be the products of this illusions. As finite subjects of temporal succession, it means that we have no control over the operations of *maya.* Consequently the embodied existents, on account of their empirical limitations, become the victims of transcendental illusion, and thereby participate in the operations that are enacted by it. Subsequently comes into being the mental confusion whereby one is unable to discriminate between the real and the unreal in terms of which the subject is identified with the object and vice versa. What it means with regard to knowledge is this: empirical knowledge, no matter what its form may be, is always characterised by error, and the nature of error consists in imputing the unreal upon the real, which otherwise means that the unreal is taken to be the real, which it is not. Since the individual is unable to know what is real and what is unreal, he thereby mistakes the Self for that which is not-self. This erroneous knowledge becomes manifest when the individual says: "I am thin, fat, tall, and so on." The mistake, thus, consists in identifying the Self with the body. It is in identifying wrongly something with something in which the epistemic error *(ajnana)* lies.

This mental confusion, according to Shankara, is beginningless *(anadi).* If ignorance is said to be beginningless, does it mean that it can have no end? Not at all. Although beginningless, ignorance can be brought to an end upon the attainment of right knowledge. Prior to knowing what is right knowledge, it is necessary to understand the character of erroneous knowledge and how and in what manner it is identical with the knowledge that is given rise to upon experiencing an illusion. On account of the beginningless ignorance, which gives rise to confusion concerning the nature of the Self and non-self, there occurs a knowing process in terms of which something is superimposed *(adhyasa)* upon something, and consequently such notions are given rise to as 'I' and 'mine'. With the emergence of 'I' and 'mine' comes into being the notion of an agent who, while engaging in various activities, has either pleasant or painful experiences. Whatever experiences this empirical ego may have, they are always in terms of contrast: either they are painful or pleasant. It is this contrasting nature of experience which is constitutive of the empirical mode of existence. To the extent the individual remains under the impact of ignorance, to that extent he will think of himself as an agent of action, as an experiencer of various experiences, which means that he will have to reap the fruit of his actions. When translated into theological language, it means that the individual will have to undergo the cycle of birth and death, that is, be part of the *samsaric* wheel of becoming. Freedom from this *samsaric* becoming, and thereby from all that which this becoming entails, comes to be, according to Shankara, upon the realisation of the nature of the Self, which is neither the agent of action nor the experiencer of various empirical experiences. The realisation of the Self denotes the elimination of ignorance, and thereby of mental confusion. It is for the purpose of the removal of ignorance that the study of Vedanta is undertaken. The goal, therefore, is clearly soteriological, which is freedom from becoming, which, in Vedantic language, denotes to abide in the essential nature of the Self.

It is one thing to speak of transcendental illusion in theoretical terms, but quite different to explain as to what it is. To grasp as to what the transcendental illusion is, it is essential to know as to what the empirical illusion is. On the basis of the analogy of empirical illusion, we can know what the transcendental illusion is, as illusion is common to both of them. If the transcendental illusion is analogous to the empirical illusion, it would mean that the nature of the former can be known upon knowing the nature of the latter. As the empirical illusion falls within our experience, it is, thus, much more easy for us to know as to what illusion *per se* is. Illusion, according to Shankara, is that which is characterised by erroneous knowledge, which means that the cognition of an object comes to be on account of mistaken perception. The knowledge that emerges on account of illusion is not of a non-existent object like that of a barren woman's son, but of an actual object that is presented to consciousness by the senses. If the illusory object is an actual object, then the question arises as to why illusory knowledge is considered to be erroneous? Illusory knowledge is said to be erroneous because it emerges when something or its attributes are superimposed *(adhyasa)* on something else, which means that the object *X* is being superimposed upon the object *Y*. Instead of cognising the *X* as the actual object of cognition, we cognise the object *Y* as being real. The illusory knowledge, thus, is said to be erroneous on account of taking the unreal as the real. We may, therefore, say that superimposition is a process whereby something, which has previously been observed, is being, through recollection and memory, superimposed upon something that is given in the present.

This analysis concerning superimposition, and thereby of erroneous knowledge, tells us that there are three essential components involved in this entire process, and the components are: (a) there is something given in the present, which serves as the ground of that which is being superimposed. What it means is this: the rope is given, and it is upon this given, namely, the rope, upon which snake is superimposed. In this manner the rope serves as the ground of the superimposed snake. Although the rope, which is the ground of the superimposed snake, is real, yet on account of mistaken perception rope is never cognised. Instead of rope, what is cognised is the snake, and so is considered to be real, which it, in fact, is not. Now the question is: Why should we perceive the snake and not the rope, when the former is not the given? It is the second element of superimposition which answers this question. (b) The second element represents that which has been observed or cognised previously, and which now, on account of memory and recollection, is being superimposed upon that which is given in the present. In the case of rope-snake it denotes that the previously cognised snake, through memory, is being superimposed upon the rope, which is the given and serves as substratum of the illusory object, namely, of the snake. It is the memory-object, and not the real one, which is being superimposed upon the real object, and consequently the real object is never cognised. Instead what is cognised is the projected object, and so accordingly is considered to be real. (c) The third element that is involved in this entire drama is the appearance of the illusory object itself. To the extent the illusory object is not known as being illusory, to that extent it will be taken to be the real object of cognition. What it amounts to saying is that the attributes of the superimposed object get merged into the given object, thereby allowing the illusory object to emerge in its fullness. When the illusory snake is cognised, we have the same experience of terror which we experience upon seeing the real one. We may, thus, say that erroneous knowledge is characterised by an illegitimate transference of the 'what' of *X* to the 'that' of *Y*. The process of superimposition, and thereby of erroneous knowledge, consists in transferring the memory-object upon the object that is given at the time of illusion. In epistemic terms it denotes that the unreal object is illegitimately transferred, through the process of superimposition, upon the real object. In whatever way, thus, error may be defined, it cannot be denied, maintains Shankara, that it is nothing else but misapprehension or mistaken perception of something as something else.

Insofar as illusion itself is concerned, it can be both perceptual and non-perceptual, either conditioned by the external media or not so. The perceptual illusion is that in which the cognised object, upon gaining right knowledge, is sublated, and accordingly is known as being of illusory nature. In the case of rope-snake, for example, we take the snake, instead of the rope, as being the real object of cognition because of the destitution of right knowledge. However, we come to know of snake as being illusory, upon gaining the right knowledge, which is that of rope. This kind of perceptual illusion is spoken of as being optical. There is another kind of perceptual illusion, which is termed as being refractive. This illusion is linked to a stick which we perceive to be bent in water. Such kinds of perceptual illusion are said to be normal on account of them being perceived commonly. Such perceptual illusions continue to occur even when they are subtlated upon knowing them to be illusions. Accordingly have these perceptual illusions been referred to as veridical. The world as an illusory appearance belongs to this category of illusion, because we think or perceive the world to be real when it is actually unreal. We superimpose this unreal world upon the real, which is *brahman-atman,* the ground of the world as illusion. In this kind of illusion there is an element of subjectivity involved, in that we no more suffer from erroneous knowledge when we know the object of cognition to be illusory.

The non-perceptual erroneous knowledge is basically characterised by the opinions or views one upholds or thinks to be true, which, upon critical examination, turn out to be untrue. Such knowledge is said to be illusory or wrong because what one believes in turns out to be untrue. Conceptually what happens is the superimposition of the wrong opinions or views upon that which is true and authentic. The conceptual wrong knowledge, however, is abandoned upon its negation through right knowledge.

This analysis of illusion makes it quite difficult for the realists to explain as to what illusion is and why it occurs when knowledge is seen as representing that which is cognised. If knowledge corresponds to what is perceived, then what status should be given to the knowledge that occurs on account of illusion, is a question which the realists find difficult to answer. For the realists the world and the objects therein exist independently of consciousness, which means that it makes no difference, insofar as the existence of entities is concerned, whether they are perceived, and thereby known, or not. This contention of the realists denotes that things exist independently of perception. Knowledge, within this conceptual framework, is seen as representing the objects exactly as they are upon their cognition, which means that knowledge neither adds nor subtracts anything to and from them. If this be the case, then knowledge cannot be viewed as being constructive. Accordingly the object that is known undergoes no modification on account of knowledge. As the object is known as it is in itself, it means that there is no possibility for error to occur. But error in knowledge occurs, which is testified by the experiences of illusion we commonly have. So the question arises: why should error arise in knowledge when it is said to be representative in nature? To answer the objection of the opponents, the realists have tried various options, and some of them are given below.

One of the ways which the realists, particularly Prabhakara, have adopted concerning error is the theory of *akhyativada* which, while upholding that error is not possible logically, grudgingly maintains that error, in case of its occurrence, maybe considered as representing partial truth. Error is seen as representing partial truth not because of miapprehension, but because of non-apprehension of what truth is. Further Prabhakara asserts that cognition should not be treated as being of unitary nature, which means that there is no unity in what we cognise. Rather cognition is characterised by two distinct, and thereby unrelated, elements corresponding to their objective counterparts. As to why error arises is because of non-apprehension of the distinction *(bhedagraha)* that exists between cognitions and their respective objects. Let us, for example, take into consideration the rope-snake illusion. The rope-snake illusion occurs, say the realists, when the distinction between the snake and the rope is not apprehended as it should be. So, according to this view, the rope-snake illusion is caused on account of non-apprehension in terms of which snake is imposed upon the rope, which is the ground of the illusory snake. This cumbersome explanation does not at all tell us as to why error should arise at all when knowledge is thought to be representing the object that is being cognised.

Whatever be the explanation of the realists concerning error, it is a fact of experience as well as of common knowledge that in error there is the involvement of one's subjectivity. Also when we perceive a snake instead of a rope, it is not just the matter of non-apprehension of the distinction between the rope and the snake. Rather error is caused on account of misapprehension, which means that we mistake the identity of the one for the other. This becomes quite explicit when we recognise the fact that the rope is misperceived as a snake when latter is presented to consciousness as an object and not just a memory-image. So the question of non-apprehension concerning error does not arise at all. Further the realists assert that error comes to be when two cognitions, which are distinct and unrelated, remain unrecognised. If that is the case, then mind should at least recognise the distinction between them, which it does not. So the *akhyativada* does not at all answer the question as to why error should arise at all when knowledge is seen simply as representing the object as it is.

There have been other attempts made by the realists concerning the arising of error. One of the attempts has resulted in the Nyaya theory of *anyatha-khyati.* The contention of this theory is that the illusory snake, instead of rope, is perceived as an objective entity on account of a unique perception called the *jnana-lakshana-pratyaksha.* In postulating this theory concerning error the Nyaya realists thereby try to evade the question, which is: Why does error at all arise? The Nyaya realists, however, accept that error comes to be not because of non-apprehension, but because of misperception, even though this may be restricted to false relations only. What it means in the context of rope-snake illusion is this: the rope and the snake are said to be two distinct, and thereby unrelated, reals. The relation that occurs between the two is treated as being false. This means that error emerges when the false relation between the two distinct reals is thought to be real. The presented object, to consciousness, which is the rope, is perceived otherwise *(anyatha)*, whereas the represented object, which is the snake, is to be found elsewhere *(anyatra)*. This analysis of error does not tell us as to why there should be a misperception concerning the rope at the time of its presentation to consciousness. If it is, however, asserted that the snake is nothing more than a memory-image, then that would mean that it cannot be presented to consciousness as an object. Also the question arises: As to why there should come into existence false relation between the two distinct and unrelated objects when knowledge neither constructs nor distorts the object of cognition? Recognising these difficulties concerning error, the realist Kumarila propounded his famous theory of *viparita-khyati* in terms of which due place is given to subjectivity as being responsible in causing error to be. It means that the realists abandon to this extent their realism. For Kumarila error consists in the misapprehension of two imperfect cognitions. On account of misapprehension, they are wrongly synthesised and consequently are brought together into a unitary cognition in error *(viparita-graha)*. Kumarila, thus, may be seen as serving the necessary link between realism and idealism.

Shankara, while pointing out the logical deficiencies of realism concerning error, tells us in clear terms that there is no any other logical option than to consider error as a superimposition *(adhyasa)* upon the real. This erroneous superimposition upon the real expresses itself in terms of identification *(tadatmya)* of the unreal with the real. When error is said to consist in the identification of the unreal with the real, it means that error can express itself only as being real, when it evidently is false. This identification of the real with the unreal cannot be actualised unless it is *mutual*, which means that the relation between the two terms is realised when both of them agree to it. Although the identification between the two terms may be mutual, yet there is a difference between the identification of the real with the unreal and of the unreal with the real. The difference between the two lies in the fact that the unreal is ontically false *(mithya)*, whereas the real is not. As the unreal is *a priori* false, so it cannot exist except as being a superimposition upon the real. Even when the unreal appears to exist as a superimposition upon the real, it exists epistemically and not ontically, which means that it appears to be existing to the extent illusion lasts. So we may say that the object of illusion exists epistemically, and not ontically, to the extent illusion continues to be, and upon its negation, the object disappears completely from our sight.

(To be Continued)

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MORAL LAW AND WORLD PEACE

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

From the very beginning of the history of mankind, the necessity for the establishment of the moral law has been keenly evident. At the root of all religions, civic laws or any kind of idealism there is a pronounced objective that pertains to the peace, happiness and progress of the individual, and harmony, welfare and evolution of the community and society. These can be ensured only through the construction of a sound ethical foundation.

At no time has the world been free from the stresses of conflict and disharmony: at no time has man felt the absence of the need for peace and amity. There is an eternal struggle between his higher self and the lower appetites, the interaction between the material and the spiritual always keeping the human spirit in a state of ferment. Man cannot do without his material needs, and he can never have peace or happiness without spiritual integration and realisation.

BALANCED OUTLOOK

The primary necessity of life is, therefore, the cultivation of a right perspective which will refuse to be distorted by the rigors of circumstances. The idealism of man should be adapted to his practical needs—of his body as well as his spirit.

A spiritual perspective which neglects the material welfare of society, cannot realise its values in a substantial measure or inculcate them in the life of the community: likewise, preoccupation with material considerations alone without any spiritual idealism will corrode all the good graces of life and foster disharmony and war.

There are so many international conventions, governing and upholding various codes of moral law, to which many of the nations of the world are supposed to owe allegiance at least by virtue of being signatories. The question is how far the spirit of the moral law is fulfilled in international relationship.

POWER RIVALRY

The world is divided into major power blocks, each trying to extend its influence into wherever there is a political vacuum, or wherever there is a possibility of gaining such an objective through whatever means that might be feasible.

At lower tiers the same thing is found in the stronger trying to overawe the weaker—either nations, communities or individuals. Any international moral code by itself, therefore, cannot be of much use, except having the benefit of a statute value, unless the spiritual conscience of mankind is awakened—on the individual level to begin with.

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The individuals constitute the community and the nation. Man must inculcate the spirit of moral law in his heart first, for without this inner light all his endeavours will ultimately be barren.

LACK OF SINCERITY

There has been no dearth of moral codes in all the scriptures of the world. Practically, in every Constitution of every nation moral idealism is the ringing note. But the misfortune of the human race is that it professes one thing and does another.

Religious teachings thrive on the base of ethics; political creeds draw inspiration from ethical idealism and justice for the common man; social principles flourish on the moral code to ensure harmony in the community. If these were effective, even to a small extent, life would really be blessed and the world a paradise.

The endeavour of man, therefore, should be to regenerate himself first and practise the basic steps in religion. No one can be religious without being ethics-minded or moral in his practical life.

There is no Christianity without the Sermon on the Mount; there is no Buddhism without the Noble Eight-Fold Path; there is no Hinduism without the Yama-Niyama or the Sadhana-Chatushtaya.

Take care of the base; the super-structure will take care of itself. Take care of what you are today; tomorrow will take care of itself.

* * *

MYSTERIOUS MAYA

When you are in the burial ground, you make various resolves thus: 'I will lead a virtuous life: I will do more Japa, more meditation: I will never hurt other's feelings.' But, as soon as you come back to the house, you forget everything. This is Maya. Sometimes the husband and the wife quarrel in the house, on account of some friction and lack of psychological unity of hearts; the husband wants to abandon the wife, renounce the world and embrace Sannyasa. Again she smiles and he clings to her like a leech! This is Maya. So powerful is Maya's influence over the poor deluded Jiva. But the Lord has assured you in the Gita that if you take refuge in Him, He will enable you to cross this Maya very easily.

—Swami Sivananda

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PARABLE OF THE ELEPHANT'S BATH

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

A Mahout took an elephant to the Ganga and gave it a nice bath for over an hour. He applied pounds of soap and scrubbed its whole body nicely. He was thoroughly satisfied. He took it out of the water and was driving it home. The moment the elephant reached the bank of the Ganga, it took with its trunk a large quantity of dust and dirt and smeared its whole body with it. The Mahout realised that all his effort was wasted upon it. He drove it back to the forest and made it lift logs of wood. He extracted much work from it. Whatever effort he put forth in this direction was not wasted at all! He realised that the elephant was fit only for this, and it was wiser to take work from it than to waste time in bathing it.

Elephant is a Tamasic being. A Tamasic man given to all kinds of vices is comparable to the elephant. The Mahout is a saintly soul. The saint tries to clean the vicious man with the soap of scriptural knowledge and bathes him with Japa, Kirtan, etc. But the moment he finds a chance, the vicious man sprinkles dust and dirt upon himself. The saint understands the vicious man's nature. He puts him to hard work. He extracts much useful work from him. The vicious man works like the elephant. Work eventually purifies him.

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